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ALETHEA
BY
SARAH BARRATT

49. 651.



ALETHEA;
OR,
THE MAID OF THE DESERT.

ALETHEA;
OR,
THE MAID OF THE DESERT.

BY
SARAH BARRATT.

"No wither'd leaflet falls to earth—
No blade of grass bursts from its sheath of green;—
No grain of sand is swallow'd by the wave—
Unnoted by that ruling Providence
That guides the universe, yet stoops to clothe
The flower with beauty! And from seeming ills
Works out our truest, most enduring good!
* * * * *

Then break not heart! the will of Heaven be thine!"

Anna Cora Mowatt.

LONDON:
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FLEET STREET.
1849.



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CLIFFORD'S INN PASSAGE, FLEET STREET.

DEDICATION.

TO MISS F. H. HENSLow.

My dear Miss Henslow,

I esteem it no little happiness and honour to be permitted to dedicate this humble performance to you ; for all who enjoy the pleasure of your acquaintance, know well that every thought and action of your life are bent on the promotion of virtue, —the cause which I presume to hope this little volume is calculated to support.

The intercourse, though of no long duration, which has subsisted between us, has shewn me that much suffering may be endured with a thankful heart. Your trials, from long indisposition and pain, have been, and are, very great, and nothing but a firm belief in the good intentions of Providence, as set forth in the volume of inspiration, could have enabled you to support them with such patience and submission. Thus

do you realize practically the principles which it is the design of these pages to promulgate, and I can, with truth, affirm, that I have learned many a salutary lesson from your meek example.

Having persevered so nobly in the path of goodness, I earnestly pray that it may please our Heavenly Father to reward you with such a measure of health as may be best suited to promote his eternal ends.

I am,

My dear Miss Henslow,

Most truly and affectionately yours,

SARAH BARRATT.

P R E F A C E.

THE writer of the following pages here submits her first literary effort to the favourable care of her *friends*, and the kind consideration of the *public*.

Her chief object has been to display the love of God, as shown by the supporting strength he gives to those who are persecuted for the truth as it is in Jesus : for this reason she has chosen the period of one of the persecutions of the early christians in the east.

Should the authoress have made manifest to one mind that God is love ;—should one heart only be gained to reciprocate this love, though, of course, but in a finite degree, the solicitude of a young female in venturing to appear before a well-informed and reading public, as an authoress, will not be without a blessed and happy result.

A L E T H E A .

CHAPTER I.

“ His steed is speck'd with foam, its dripping flanks
Heave with the long exertion !—Still he rides
On to the distant goal—Even here . . .

ERRATA.

- On pages 29, 47, 49, 62, &c. &c., *read* rung, sprung, sunk,
shrunken, &c., *not* “rang,” “sprang,” “sank,” “shrank,” &c.
Page 53, line 1, a comma instead of period after “who it was”
— 56, &c., tranquillity *not* “tranquility”
— 69, trackless *not* tractless
— 72, suspense *not* “suspence”
— 132, line 10, me *not* “I”
— 137, line 22, thee and me *not* “thou and I”

with rose colour and bright purple, the shroud of night throws her dusky shadow on the plain.

Before us lies a mangled horse, on which some vultures are feeding ; and their cries sound through the dreary solitude. Were not foot-

■

A L E T H E A .

CHAPTER I.

“ His steed is speck'd with foam, its dripping flanks
Heave with the long exertion !—Still he rides
As if from danger fleeing,—Even here,
Amid the barren sands, danger and death
May lurk.”

“ Dorfefeld.”

It is evening—evening in the desert. The plain, which on all sides touches the horizon, bears no sign of vegetable life ; its surface of loose burning sand, blocks of flintstone, and hillocks of gravel, is seldom refreshed with the rain of heaven, and could not nourish Arabia's hardiest plant.

Like a disk of fire, the sun appears travelling fast to some more fruitful clime ; and while the western sky is a blaze of golden light, mixed with rose colour and bright purple, the coming shroud of night throws her dusky shadow on the plain.

Before us lies a mangled horse, on which some vultures are feeding ; and their cries sound through the dreary solitude. Were not foot-

marks visible, one might suppose man ne'er visited a scene so different from his accustomed haunts: Alas! each spot of earth, whether the mountain's brow or the cavern's depth, has sometime borne the child of sorrow, or echoed with the cry of anguish; often has the wilderness been marked with scenes of woe; in such a region Hagar, wasted by famine and thirst, took her first-born from her breast, and laying him upon the sand, with a mother's anguish turned aside till the messenger of death should waft his spirit to those angels who in heavenly realms watch over infants⁽¹⁾. In this wilderness also, the innocent, the beautiful, have been deprived of life by the descendants of that child, Ishmael, and their bones left to bleach upon the sand.

The footprints before mentioned, are those of three Christians, who, being deprived by heathen Rome of the friends that cast affection's halo round them, were driven to seek within this Petrean wild the peace their fellow-men denied. Soon their stock of water failed; their thirst increased, and, through the excessive heat, became intolerable; when they reached this plain the favourite steed yonder expired and their two remaining ones, panting and exhausted, were scarcely able to carry their afflicted riders.

(1) See the Notes at the end.

It was a trying moment. Around the Christians lay the trackless wilderness ; all human help was distant, and a lingering death seemed inevitable ; but hope, even then, cheered their hearts with its sunshine ; and faith whispered, one mightier than man, even the Eternal Father, beheld and would deliver : therefore, with united impulse they looked up to heaven's blue vault in earnest prayer. Nor did their supplication remain unanswered.

In the south a bird appeared, which, as onward it flew, proved to be the pelican carrying to its brood a draught of water. As the news of pardon, to one condemned,—or the sight of land to a shipwrecked mariner, was that bird welcome to the wanderers : they hastened forward in the direction whence it came, till a scene of beauty burst upon their sight ; 'twas a fairy spot, a diamond of the desert, and looked like those green isles that rise above the waves of the Pacific.

From a carpet of emerald green grew flowers of every colour, wasting

" their sweetness on the desert air,"

the oleander and the fig blended their foliage ; and several palms drooped gracefully to shade the fountain which fed this wild luxuriance.

Near its waters are the Christians in this quiet eventide. Foremost of the group is Clement,

an aged man, whose robe of linen is crossed on the left shoulder and falls in loose folds to his feet ; a long beard, white with age, adds to his venerable appearance, and though the ghastly hue of sickness rests upon his cheek, and care has ploughed many a furrow there, his countenance bears an expression of profound tranquillity, and in his eye shines a light so radiant that it seems unearthly. That light is the harbinger of death, is a ray from that glorious faith Christianity has lighted in his heart, and which enables him to see the eternal home he is fast approaching. His daughter, Alethea, a maiden dressed in the flowing garments of Arabia, supports him in her arms. The long veil worn by eastern females is thrown back, leaving uncovered her face, which is a perfect oval and beams with innocence and sensibility ; as she gazes on her father the tears chase each other down her pale cheek, and the deepest melancholy overspreads her countenance.

Close by, is Irenæus, a young man, busily engaged in erecting a tent. His graceful figure is clad in the Athenian garb, which admirably suits the classic outline of his features, and his open, lofty brow bespeaks an intellect profound and penetrating. A noble dog crouches at his feet watching, with evident satisfaction, his simplest movement ; and the two jaded horses silently

crop the luxuriant herbage and occasionally drink at the spring.

The breeze of night moved the sand like ocean's waves, and moaned among the palms ; well can they that have had the love-bond that held them to earth rudely snapped, imagine, that when night wrapt the desert, Alethea bent over her dying parent and wished the lingering hours to pass, yet feared their flight because each moment seemed to steal his breath. She carefully wiped the moisture from his brow while watching his broken slumbers ; and, forgetful of her own weakness, sustained the weight of his powerless frame.

Grief is found throughout creation, and subdues not only our own race but the lower grades of being, the dove mourns her absent mate and the dog pines to death by the body of his master. Though sorrow bowed the mind of Alethea, yet, unseen to mortal eye, there was in her heart a spring, which, like currents flowing beneath the surface of the sea, poured a stream of consolation into her soul. She had throughout her trials with deep devotion traced God in all His glorious works. In the raging storm she heard his voice, in the lightning's glare beheld His power, and His love in the gifts of nature and of grace : from earliest childhood she had been taught to

think of him in joy or sorrow, and now, affliction gathered around, she was sustained by the assurance that Jehovah in mercy permitted all her trials, and 'the still small voice' whispered consolation to her spirit. She knew that her father enjoyed the same communion with Heaven, therefore, with calmer, sweeter resignation she thought of his approaching death ; for though she knew his body would return to dust and become assimilated to the elements, in hope she could look down the vista of futurity to the hour, when freed from the imperfections of mortality, she would meet him with kindred spirits in the immortal bowers of heaven.

Some readers may imagine the maiden was presumptuous thus to feel certain of her parent's eternal peace, but they should remember, that as pure water flows from no corrupted source, so real goodness, manifest in a Christian's life, can only spring from a heart renewed by grace.

CHAPTER II.

Jerome.

The town in ruins ! and part—
The earthquake has engulfed !

Constantio.

Alas !
I saw the dread destruction. Death,
Stern death, has had a feast.

Calabrian Bride.

WE will for awhile leave Alethea, her friend Irenæus, and the desert fountain, and relate scenes in the early life of her dying father, and of the persecution that banished her from home.

The parents of Clement worshiped with the Christian church at Sardis, and were faithful among many that were lukewarm through their leaning to worldliness and idolatry.

Formerly they had lived in Greece and were then stoics, but renounced that vain philosophy when they settled in Sardis, and became Christians through the teachings of the apostle John; who, being released from banishment in Patmos, a short time previous to Clement's birth, visited the seven churches of Asia to strengthen their faith, and deliver the messages with which he had been commissioned. To some he bore words of commendation, but unto Sardis a fearful warning and earnest exhortation to repentance.

Vast was the concourse of citizens assembled

to hear his discourse, and Androgenes, the father of Clement, imagining he taught some new system of philosophy, joined the listening throng till the Apostle's words thrilled so powerfully through his heart, that curiosity took a deeper tone, and he determined to know more of the teachings of the holy John.

Undetermined what course to pursue, the next evening, wrapt in thought, he wandered without the city : the apostle met him, and recognizing the stranger who had appeared so attentive the night before, inquired, if he were seeking after Truth ?

"I am," returned Androgenes, "and your discourse last evening interested me deeply. All the varied systems of philosophy taught in Greece I have examined ; and, although a glimpse of truth is sometimes dimly visible, they seem full of error, therefore, I would gladly learn if Christians possess a pure and reasonable faith."

"We do," returned the apostle, "and endeavour in simplicity to worship the Supreme Being who created the universe ; believing that from him proceeds our present happiness, our future bliss ; and, on this earth, where all but sin is beautiful, his love has placed us, to prepare for a perfect and eternal state.

"When earth, as our abode, was young, man thus thought of God, and in spirit talked with

the creator : by degrees the intellectual obscured the heavenly, and man became a sensual being, forgetful of the God that made him. Still there remained within his soul a reflection of the vanished light, a sense of weakness that wanted to lean on something powerful, and unable to comprehend perfection—to adore the spiritual he bowed to the host of heaven, and made the lamp of day his god, till, sinking lower and still lower, he deified departed heroes, and even beasts and plants.

“Thus, through forsaking the source of truth, man turned to idolatry and the vain philosophy of which you speak.

“Still, in the darkest period, a few remained faithful, and, with such, God made a covenant and established the rainbow its seal; it is his banner of peace—the varied hues of which it is composed are emblems of his attributes, and the tint of blue that dyes the sky when every cloud has vanished, pourtrays his love embracing each atom of creation.

“Age after age has rolled away, yet, to the believer, the rainbow remains a sign of the Invisible; we gaze upon it, and remember, our God is Love.”

“How must we prepare for the future state you speak of, and how worship a Deity whose power is so immense?” asked Androgenes.

“By fervent prayer, a virtuous life, and belief in Jesus as the true Messiah,” returned the apostle. “To him, from time’s first dawn, have holy men in spirit looked ; believing that, in the latter days he would stand upon the earth, centring in himself all types and figures of the Jewish law, and remove the veil of error from the hearts of men, by displaying the glories of eternal truth. Inspired by God, they looked into futurity, and predicted the advent of the Messiah : and their prophecies are verified, for Christ, the chosen of the Father, appeared, not, as the Jews anticipated, surrounded by splendour and the pageantry of an earthly sovereign, but in an obscure village, the child of an earthly mother. His life, from infancy, was one of self-denial, and he partook of the infirmities of our nature ; often have I beheld him fainting with fatigue, hunger, or sorrow, while the ingratitude and stupidity of those his heart yearned to save, was a constant trial. We, his chosen followers, little prized his transcendant worth, grieved him by our incredulity, and fled on the night he was betrayed to his persecutors ; yet, through all, his love was not diminished. At length his mission being fulfilled, on Calvary’s mount he died an ignominious death. Earth trembled beneath his sufferings, light refused to witness : the grave

released her prisoners—all nature stood amazed—all but man—man, for whom this was accomplished—this price paid, remained unmoved, felt no compassion for the agonies of the Redeemer, but aggravated his sufferings by scorn and ridicule.

“Triumphing over death, the Saviour rose, in token of his victory, and ascended to the abode of happiness. So is it with faithful souls when life’s brief course is ended; purified from the frailties of earth, and citizens of the eternal city—the new Jerusalem, they dwell in the home of angels and through eternity are with God. Heaven cannot be obtained without an effort; we must, like our Saviour, who, being created free to stand or fall, resisted temptation, endeavour to obey the commands of God, and not rely on our own merits, but on his unbounded love: repent our past transgressions; sincerely ask forgiveness, and resigning sublunary vanities, calmly endure tribulation; and live as Heaven-bound pilgrims.

“Such is the path to Heaven, and all who wish may enter, for our Lord has said, ‘ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.’”

“Each word thou hast uttered, impresses my mind like a message of truth,” said Androgenes. “Yet how is it your religion, which appears excellent, should produce such little change in its fol-

lowers ; I have been disgusted with the lives of many in Sardis."

"Be not surprised," returned the apostle, "that some professing Christianity shrink from its duties : the exalted virtue it enjoins is so contrary to the habits and sentiments of heathens, that, while many admire, few have sufficient strength of mind to obey, its precepts. On my first visit, many in this city, tired of their ancient superstitions, heard joyfully the doctrines I taught ; a church was formed, and for awhile it flourished ; the pleasures of earth allured ; persecution assailed ; its members then lost the fervency of their zeal ; and united the title of christian with the sensuality of the heathen. But, imagine not they are Jehovah's true servants, rather are they his enemies ; far better is it to continue in idolatry than thus disgrace our holy faith. The doom of such is fixed—it lingereth not ; Sardis shall perish. While at Patmos, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty. Unto the angel of the church in Sardis write ; these things saith he that hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars ; I know thy works, that thou hast a

name, that thou livest and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die : for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If, therefore, thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.'

"Such will be that city's fate. Blooming as now she looks, embosomed in myrtle and cypress groves, she verges on decay : her palaces, where regal robes have swept the marble floors, will be the scorpion's home, and resound with the jackal's cry. She shall be termed the forsaken of God ; the sun shall not rise upon her and the moon shall scarce give her light, because she hath been faithless to the God that loved her, and disregarded his commandments. Nevertheless, a few remain, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and their names are written in the book of life, for they are worthy.

"To them I commend thee, as guides in the path to heaven ; they will assist thee on thy journey.

"Now, farewell ; may the Lord bless, and teach thee the perfect law of love. On earth, my brother, we shall meet no more, for this feeble frame has borne the labours of a hundred years,

and longs for the rest of the grave ; this heart, once joined in friendship with the Saviour, sighs to meet him in the realms above, and a voice within me whispers, 'Thou shalt soon be there.'"

Such was the conversation that led to the conversion of Androgenes, who, when the kind apostle went away, returned to the city, formed an acquaintance with several members of the church, and perused the manuscripts of holy writ they lent him ; until, convinced of the truth of Christianity, he joined the church, became one of its holiest members, and trained his children in the fear of God.

Clement was the youngest child, and possessed the privilege (rare in those days) of hearing, from earliest childhood, the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and truly his home might be termed an earthly paradise, its very atmosphere was love.

His parents participated in his pleasures, were his companions in studious hours, and, in fact, shared his every thought.

A stranger to affliction he attained his sixteenth year, when a malignant fever raged in Sardis, and among thousands that fell victims, was his mother, who caught the disease while attending the last moments of a friend, and died before her relatives could be summoned.

Scarcely had Clement recovered this calamity,

when another and more heart-rending catastrophe approached.

During the plague, the palace, once inhabited by the mighty Cræsus, was appropriated as a hospital for the poorer sufferers, and Clement, regardless of danger, visited them daily, administering to their temporal wants, and calming their troubled spirits with the consolations of religion. One evening, returning from his daily task, he was surprised at the oppressive heat and sulphureous odour in the atmosphere: a low rumbling, as of distant thunder, seemed to come from the bowels of the earth. Instead of gliding quietly along, the Pactolus overflowed, boiling with foam, while, to increase the awfulness of the scene, a thick darkness gathered over the doomed city. The terror-stricken people, dreading they scarce knew what, ran in all directions, some to the forum—others to the temple of Isis—the christians to the house of Jehovah.

Striking was the difference between believers and mere professors. The former, trusting in God, calmly placed their lives beneath his care; the latter, tortured with remorse and doubt, rent the air with cries in the wildness of despair. Clement hastened towards home; but ere he touched its threshold, suddenly the earth shook—the houses fell—a fearful chasm yawned beside

him—the abode of his childhood, rocking to its base, fell with a deafening crash. All was the work of a moment. On the other side of the gulf stood his sister, imploring him with extended arms to save her—he leaned forward—their hands touched—her foot slipped—one piercing shriek—she was gone! earth again shook convulsively, the chasm closed o'er his yet breathing kindred, and he, thrown violently to some distance, alone escaped the awful entombment.

When his consciousness returned, the moon had risen, and her pale beams shone serenely on the fearful scene; how changed was Sardis since she last paced through the trackless sky! hearts, then throbbing with joy, had for ever ceased to beat; husband and wife, parent and child were gone, and patricians and plebeians, friends and foes, were swallowed in the same grave: like a queen she journeyed on, unmindful of their fate, and nature wore a glorious dress though the glory of Sardis was no more.

Each moment, as Clement passed along, some object of distress met his eye: here one dying of the pestilence had crawled from his room and lay moaning in the street; there a young mother embracing her infant sat weeping over its father's corpse, while numbers ran in search of relatives,

who, alas ! were lost. Hastening from this abode of sorrow he reached the mountain, where for hours he sat plunged in that state of half consciousness which succeeds the terror of a direful calamity. So suddenly had his home, his friends, his sphere of usefulness vanished, that it appeared more like a dream than reality, and involuntarily came the thought of returning to his parents, and then the remembrance of their fate and his utter solitude rushed into his mind overwhelming him with anguish. Reflection at length resumed her seat within his breast, and he felt the necessity of forming plans for his future life. "The ties binding me to Sardis are snapped—each spot recalls the past, saddening my spirit ; why should I linger near its ruins ?" he said, then thought turned to the thousands that had been destroyed. "The voice of them that have perished in the pestilence and earthquake," he mentally exclaimed, "calls to me from the grave to rescue their brethren from destruction, to bear the lamp of truth to lands benighted, and there display the path of peace." Then his mind returned to the loss he had sustained, and he mournfully continued : "Why, when my kindred have perished, am I alone preserved to tell the tale ? Lord, thy way is in the sea, thy path in the mighty waters, and thy footsteps are not known."

but I own thy power, I adore thy goodness ; for thou didst rescue me ; oh receive my life as an offering of gratitude ! may each desire and work, each thought and word, be wholly thine ; and united to thee may my heart be a temple for thy spirit to inhabit.

“ Why am I preserved, but that, filled with love, I may go forth and preach the gospel. Such is my destiny ; to fit me for this holy office, have I been nourished with the food of God’s word, and am now bereaved of home and kindred : henceforth, the heathen shall be my people, and with a brothers’ love will I labour for their eternal welfare. Great source of wisdom ! bless my mission, and fill me with heavenly influence, that I may lead thy wandering children to their home.”

Three days afterwards, Clement, casting a long and sorrowful glance on the spot which entombed his beloved ones, sighed an eternal farewell and commenced his journey. In poverty and solitude he wandered, enduring hunger, thirst, and persecution ; the desert’s parching heat, the cold of the frozen north ; and, like the lowly Jesus, the ground was frequently his couch, the arch of heaven his only shelter.

Sometimes he was full of despondency at the ingratitude he met with, but one hour’s communion with God revived his drooping spirit,

faith shone bright as ever, and he was again the zealous champion of the cross. Occasionally he met with kindred spirits to encourage him, especially in Philadelphia and Smyrna, where christianity flourished in its pristine purity.

Believers, adhering to their religion for its own sake, sought no earthly recompense, and, through love for their Creator, joyfully endured the loss of temporal things, knowing well, that he who feedeth the ravens and the young lions that cry unto him, would never forsake his children.

Places of more renown have perished, but Philadelphia⁽²⁾ and Smyrna⁽³⁾ remain, as if to assure mankind that both the promises and threatenings of Jehovah are faithful. He declared that although those cities should have much tribulation, yet, because they were true in heart, he would preserve them from the hour of temptation coming on all the Christian world.

Another incident, even more striking, is, that Philadelphia is honoured with the title of "Allah Shehr"—the city of God, thus singularly corresponding with the promise, that its citizens should have written upon them the name of the city of God, which is the New Jerusalem.

Where is Sardis now⁽⁴⁾? Does she also contain her thousands of inhabitants, and resound, as the Sabbath morn returns, with praise to God.

Alas ! she has fallen ; like a dream, her glory has vanished, and nothing but a few broken fragments remain of her lofty palaces, once the dwelling-place of kings. Along the Pactolus⁽⁵⁾, whose stream increased the wealth of Croesus, the Turkish herdsman tends his flock, and on the spot where the Apostle exhorted to repentance, the screech owl builds her nest.⁽⁶⁾ Thus the sun, Christianity, does not shine upon her, and the moon, Mohamedism, scarcely gives her light.

CHAPTER III.

" Now turn'd adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course;
Like panic-stricken man of yore
He trembles, smitten to the core,
By strong compunction and remorse."

Wordsworth.

" None are all evil—quickenings round his heart,
One softer feeling would not yet depart;
* * * *

Which only proved, all other virtues gone,
Not guilt itself could quench this loveliest one!"

Byron.

THE sun had set, and nature seemed sinking to repose, when a traveller wearily paced the main road towards Antioch.

His figure was tall and muscular, the sun had browned his cheek, sorrow sat upon his brow, and traces of youth were visible, while his whole countenance was that of one who had suffered much, but had been cheered by the hope his suffering was not in vain.

The traveller was Clement, who, still a solitary, journeyed o'er the earth, and was now pursuing his way towards Idumea, to diffuse among its simple-hearted, yet idolatrous, inhabitants the gospel of Jesus.

Since the night of the earthquake years had flown, bearing a record of his worth. He had sailed across the briny deep, and in its storms

been shipwrecked; paced over burning sands and had hairs-breadth escapes: in classic Greece, his learning and refined manners won him the regard of the talented and wealthy, who made him their welcome guest, but in vain, pleasure sought to drown his reason in her fascinating vortex. Love for Jehovah was enshrined in his heart, and when the heavenly one whispered "onward," he obeyed the call.

Leaning on his staff, he wiped away the drops of moisture trickling down his face;—drew close his garment, for having travelled far he keenly felt the transition from heat to cold which in the east accompanies the close of day, and then he gazed anxiously towards the city not far distant. "I thought ere this to have reached thee," he exclaimed, "and joined to-night in prayer with the believers within thy walls. Yet why repine; perchance by this weariness God has detained me in order to execute some other work." Then glancing round for a shelter, he perceived, by the fading light, a ruined building, and remembering that long ago it was his resting place, he bent his footsteps thither.

Passing through a portal in the mouldering wall, he walked across a spacious garden, and, ascending a flight of marble steps, entered a hall, whose rich mosaic floor and frescoed walls be-

spoke its ancient grandeur. Taking from his girdle the remnant of his noon-tide meal, he sat upon the pavement and began his frugal supper.

The profound silence, with the surrounding gloom, called up a train of saddest thoughts, and looking on the ruin he exclaimed, "Sad emblem of man; now thine owner has departed, there is none to stay the desolation gathering over thee: so when the soul leaves her tenement, its beauty vanishes and decay begins its work." The remembrance of his once peaceful home and its awful destruction returned again with all its freshness; to his imagination he beheld darkness gather over Sardis, heard the crash of the falling buildings, the shrieks of expiring inmates, saw the chasm yawn and close over his yet breathing kindred, until, shuddering at their doom, he rose and paced the hall.

A groan from within the ruin broke his reverie.—He listened—all was silent as the tomb; the bat winged its noiseless flight above and the moonshine played upon the pavement. Judging it was the night-wind he reclined upon the ground, against the shaft of a broken column which served for his pillow, and sank into slumber.

Again the groans came louder than before; it was not the moan of mere bodily pain, but the cry

of mental anguish, the groan of one battling with death—fighting against the fiat of his Creator : that strange unearthly sound the despairing soul alone can produce in death. Clement's blood seemed to freeze,—he rushed forward in the direction of the sound, till by the moon-beams through the ruined windows, he was guided to a staircase at the top of which glimmered a light.

On ascending he beheld at the end of a gallery of sculpture, a man lying on the ground. A lamp on a broken pedestal threw its light across the gallery, imperfectly showing the outline of its matchless statues, and shining full on a soldier's face, who, writhing in the agony of death, turned restlessly from side to side. A female stood near, clad in a simple, yet not inelegant, Roman dress, consisting of a crimson tunic and dark blue mantle fringed with gold, which fell in rich folds below the knee. No rings ornamented her slender fingers ; the only jewellery she wore was a wreath of pearls encircling her head, and from beneath it, ringlets of ebon hair fell in profusion over her shoulders, in striking contrast with the ashy paleness of her intelligent countenance.

She gazed on her father with such a look as pitying angels give when sinners stubbornly refuse the gift of pardon, and throwing herself

before him, exclaimed, "My father, my beloved father, why do you thus despair? the choice attribute of God is love; he has declared he will not reject even the vilest sinner that implores his mercy: though our sins are as scarlet, he will make them as snow; only pray and acknowledge your unworthiness, turn to him and he will not discard you."

"Ah, my child," said the dying man, "to thy pure spirit it seemeth easy to lay bare the heart to God; thou hast never stifled the voice of conscience, or felt the sting of remorse; the guilt of years weighs upon my soul; my life has been a tissue of dark crimes, and at its close shall I fall lowly before him, whom through life I have despised? shall I cry for mercy because I fear his power? would such repentance be accepted. It is too late, Pauline—my hour is come, the chambers of the grave open to admit me: yonder I behold the spirits of them I murdered, and encircled with glory is my wife. Oh, my love—my lost Zulieke, stay—stay but a moment till thou hast forgiven me—thy murderer!" Here with the convulsive energy of death, he sprang forth to catch a phantom in the distance, and fell at his daughter's feet—a corpse.

No cry escaped the maiden, no tear bedimmed her eye: a shudder passed through her frame

when she found that her father breathed no more, and, clinging to a marble column, she stood in mute unutterable grief. Yet, in the hour when the dearest tie binding her to earth had broken, she felt not forsaken, and as the myrtle yields its sweetest scent when crushed by the storm, so were her prayers in affliction most fervent. Looking earnestly towards heaven, she exclaimed, "My God, I know in love thou hast dealt this blow, give me fortitude and resignation. Oh, pity my solitude, be with me in this dark hour as in prosperous days, even as thou hast promised to be a very present help in the time of trouble."

Clement, who had been a silent witness of the whole, now approached, and addressing her, said, "Fear not, maiden, God heareth thee. To be thy friend, relieve thy loneliness, and sympathize in thy affliction, he hath guided my footsteps hither; even as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord hath mercy on them that fear him. I beheld the last moments of thy parent, and, though a stranger, will assist thee in this season of distress. To weep with them that weep and console the fatherless is my earthly mission."

Clement's voice recalled to the mourner's heart a train of long banished thoughts; it was no strange sound to Pauline. In an hour never to

be forgotten she had heard and longed for its return.

Once in his wanderings he visited the city of her home; she was one of the converts who entered by baptism the church of Christ, and his holy conversation, his earnest prayers in behalf of the newly professed, made on her heart an impression time could not erase.

Her father had been governor of one of the Roman cities, and exercised the most unparalleled cruelty until even his wife, whom for her beauty he had raised from slavery to be his partner, fell the victim of his rage, and his domestics in turn felt the stroke of his sword. His daughter was ever his beloved—his favoured—the being whose voice could soften—whose look had power to influence him. This solitary virtue, love for his child, stood out among his many vices in beautiful contrast, like a column amid ruins—a flower upon a rock.

Military duties had summoned him to a distance. During his absence, Pauline became acquainted with a christian lady from whom she heard words of truth which sank into her heart, and eventually she embraced the persecuted religion of Jesus: and was baptized by the young missionary, Clement, to signify that as water is fitted to cleanse the body, so christian truth

purifies the heart and the life, thus leading to God and righteousness and preparing man for heaven.

Bright and happy were the first days of her christian course, for, as members of one family, the early followers of our Lord sympathized in each other's joys and cares ; but soon the blast of persecution withered her earthly gladness.

Her father returned home, and, wishing to secure the emperor's favour, raised a persecution against the christians, who had increased in number during his absence.

Many were martyred before Pauline, in the seclusion of her palace, knew ; at length, attracted by the unusual tumult, she approached the lattice, and beheld those with whom she had knelt in prayer and enjoyed sweet converse, dragged along the streets, bleeding and in chains, by an enraged populace. The sight overpowered her feelings, and, closing her eyes, she tried to imagine it but a dream : again she rushed to the lattice ; the procession had vanished, not one of the vast multitude remained, yet the boisterous laughter that from a distance came, mingled with heart-rending shrieks, convinced her they were assembled in the circus.

Running wildly through the streets, regardless of the soldiers, who vainly endeavoured to impede

her progress, Pauline entered the amphitheatre, and, falling at the tyrant's feet, implored him to spare their lives. In amazement he stood speechless, scarcely believing it could be his daughter who thus knelt before him: affection prompted him to forgive, ambition commanded him to punish—the former triumphed, and he raised her from the ground; exclaiming “Pauline—Pauline—thou a christian! is it possible!” The same moment a soldier unsheathed his sword to slay a christian; springing from her father she rushed forth, and standing before the executioner, exclaimed, “Slay me, since you want a victim.” The amphitheatre rang with applause, but the feeling was momentary; when the heathen priests and soldiers interfered, the same voices that before extolled her courage, raised a cry of “down with the intruder.”

At a signal from a priest one of the soldiers seized her, and she would have fallen the victim of their cruelty, but her father could not passively remain a witness to her death. All the feelings of a parent rushed through his soul, and forgetful of popularity, of all but his child, he released her from the soldier's grasp and bore her in his arms to the palace. The people followed, and his intreaties for her to recant being vain, he was compelled to listen to their voice and allow her to be conveyed to prison.

Thither he went at nightfall, and again endeavoured to shake her resolution, but that God she had loved in prosperity upheld her at the prospect of death, and she resisted the tempter's voice.

"Since thou wilt not hearken to me, Pauline," said her father, "we must flee hence, or, when morning dawns, thy blood will dye the ground; for even my influence will fail to save thee from the enraged populace. For thee—the being on whom I have lavished my affection—whose voice has ever calmed my troubled breast, I willingly resign fame, luxury, and wealth; thou art the only link that binds me to existence, which would be a void without thy smile. Oh, my child! let us begone while night conceals us; the idea of the tortures preparing for thee is dreadful."

The darkness favoured their flight, and ere the first streak of light gilded the horizon, they were far from the city.

Vain were the attempt to picture what anguish filled the tyrant's breast during the succeeding days. In time past, when surrounded in his brilliant halls with beings equal in cruelty to himself, he had stifled the voice of conscience, but in solitude the catalogue of his crimes seemed written before him in blood, and when he hourly beheld the purity, the meekness of his daughter, and re-

flected that such had been tortured for his pleasure, he contrasted her zeal and compassion with his own cruelty, and shame and remorse rent his soul.

His health declined, and, when they reached the ruin, his illness had so increased that they were unable to proceed. In vain his daughter endeavoured to convince him God would pardon and receive; despair reigned within his guilty breast, and he expired without a ray of hope or breathing one prayer—

“He dies and makes no sign.”

Such was the death of the haughty Roman who had lived a life of pleasure,—rejected God, and slain the innocent. In that awful hour when, to him, time ceased and eternity began, his spirit, instead of being filled with hope, was tormented with the sorrow of the world that worketh death, and in that state he was summoned to the spiritual world,

CHAPTER IV.

" The dead we buried, and I went my way,
 For time admitted of no longer stay ;
 Then on I travell'd o'er the desert wild,
 Till day's fierce heat gave place to ev'ning mild."
The Crusader.

" ' He's gone !'—against her heart that hand is driven,
 Convulsed and quick—then gently raised to heav'n ;
 She look'd and saw the heaving of the main ;
 The white sail set—she dared not look again ;
 But turn'd with sickening soul within the gate——
 ' It is no dream,—and I am desolate !' "

Byron.

WHEN morning stole into the chamber of sorrow, Clement prepared to convey the soldier's body to a tomb in the depths of the garden, and, followed by the mourner, he bore it through the lofty corridors, where echo upon echo sounded back their footsteps and thus increased their sadness.

Spacious and, in olden times, magnificent was that garden, for its owner, a native of Greece, had lavished on it much wealth. Towards the east a stream entered, and, after winding through fragrant bowers, formed a tranquil lake, in which was a splendid figure of Venus springing from the ocean's foam, which the water of the lake, by means of pipes beneath the surface, represented, while one wave rising high descended around her in crystal drops. O'er the banks, willows and

acacias drooped ; the Syrian lily bloomed around : birds of varied colours fluttered among the branches, and openings between the trees displayed beds of roses and verdant lawns, where reclined groups of statues, and shady groves, in the midst of which stood a statue of the God of Silence. Thence the stream ran in separate channels, and again uniting on the brink of a precipice rushed with an astounding noise and was lost amid the bowers beneath.

Several grottoes adorned the garden, but one, excavated in the rock near the cataract, was eminent for beauty. In the centre was a fountain, and, in recesses, between Ionic pillars, were seats carved in fantastic shapes.

On the walls were sculptured, in bas-relief, scenes from the Grecian poets, and the frescoed dome represented the vault of heaven at twilight, for, being hid from the rays of the sun, this grotto formerly received light from lamps scattered over the top like evening stars.

It seemed retirement's palace ; for, when there, the soul, undisturbed by the busy scenes of life, and lulled by the sound of the waterfall and monotonous dropping of the fountain, might lose itself in pleasing reverie. There in olden times the maiden heard love's language, and the lyre was tuned to give its plaintive melody.

Near this grotto was a tomb sculptured with hieroglyphics, after the Egyptian manner, in which Clement buried the soldier. Pauline stood a passive beholder, but when she turned and cast her farewell glance, throwing herself beside the corpse she bathed it with tears, again and again kissed the pallid lips, and frantically called upon her father's name.

On returning to the ruin, Clement ventured to enquire if her home was far distant and whether he should conduct her thither. "Alas ! alas ! sir," she answered, "I am homeless, friendless ; for adhering to Jehovah the heathen sought my life, and hither my father fled to save me ; now he has perished, whither can I go ? I have no food, no friend : oh God, forsake me not !" Sobs checked her voice, and covering her face with her mantle, she wept.

Clement meditated a little, and thought of an aged female, in Antioch, whose house was a refuge for the orphan and distressed, and feeling sure that in her Pauline would find a friend, he proposed taking her thither. On hearing news so welcome and unexpected, the mourner fell upon her knees and thanked Jehovah for sending her such a friend, and implored him to reward and bless Clement.

A tear glistened in the missionary's eye on

witnessing her gratitude, and raising her from the ground, in silence he led her from the ruin. Pauline was obliged to rest so frequently that day closed ere they reached Antioch; when, after passing through many streets, Clement stopped at a house, and soon the door was opened by his aged friend, whom Pauline recognized, with surprise and joy, as the lady who had first taught her to worship God. "My child, my own Pauline," said the matron, pressing her to her heart, "is it thus, pale and care-worn, I see thee!" Then appealing to Clement, she inquired by what mysterious providence they had met. All was soon explained, and with many assurances of kindness from the matron, and thanksgiving to God for providing her with such a protector, on the part of Pauline, the evening passed away.

For many days afterwards Pauline was confined to her chamber. While attending her father she had been upheld by a strength almost supernatural, but now that work was ended, she sunk into the languor which invariably comes when the mind has been strained beyond its power.

As she recovered, it was Clement's task to administer the balm of consolation. This he effected by leading her sympathies to the calamities of others, thus withdrawing her from her own

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sorrows. He spoke of the pestilence depopulating provinces, the volcano destroying thousands, the earthquake entombing cities, and of shipwrecked mariners thrown on some rock, hopeless and famishing, till death terminated their sufferings. Thus her benevolence was excited, and the tears she shed from pity calmed her mind. The matron spoke of the early followers of Jesus who had visited that city, till the eyes of Pauline flashed with enthusiasm, and she desired, like them, to visit the afflicted, comfort the heart-broken, and carry the light of truth to the darkened soul.

Thus time glided onward till the hour came when Clement must depart, and bidding adieu to the faithful of the city, and, lastly, to the matron and Pauline, he started for Idumea. Why did Pauline linger to catch the last sound of his footsteps, and, as they died in the distance, cover her face and weep? Was it merely friendship that caused her to gaze vacantly whole nights on the starlight sky, dwelling in memory on his simplest word, so that each employment seemed spiritless now he was absent? It was love, deep and holy. Like some brilliant meteor, Clement had flashed across her path—he was gone, and darkness was around her.

Nor was her's a transitory feeling—absence

could destroy but one that blended with and ennobled her every thought, seeming a part of her very being. When thinking of him and the probability of never beholding him again on earth, she turned for supporting strength to God, and the result was, she felt raised above the world, and, communing with nature, admired the beauties of creation. The mental anguish she endured made her keenly alive to the sufferings of others, and led her to sympathize in every sister's woe, and she went forth, the messenger of mercy, consoling all, loving all, and leading them to the fountain of eternal love.

CHAPTER V.

——— " Is this the far-famed Petra,
Where once the hum of busy multitudes
Came on the ear ? was this the mart of trade ?
Awful stillness ! a silence fills its streets,
Like that which rests upon death's narrow vale,
Where chilling darkness dwells."

Anonymous.

On leaving Antioch, Clement journeyed to Judea, and, with profound awe, wandered among the ruins of Jerusalem. It was night—the moon shone brilliantly upon Mount Zion, and threw her beams on the garden of Gethsemane. Wrapt in meditation, he stood on Calvary. His Redeemer's life of perfect holiness, his sufferings in the cause of truth, agony of soul through man's ingratitude, painful death, triumphant resurrection, and entrance into heaven, passed in review before him. Overpowered with emotion he fell upon the earth, and cried, " Lord, what is man, rebellious man, that, to point his path to glory, to re-unite him with his Maker, thou shouldst endure such trials ; how boundless thy compassion, how infinite thy love ! Oh, breathe into my soul ; that, partaking of thy spirit, I may preach the gospel through the earth, and bear to sin-bound souls the news of pardon ; joyfully enduring the loss of all things, yea of life

itself, in remembrance of thee. Sustain me when weary, O Jesus; feed my hungry soul with angel's food, and refresh me with the drink of heaven*; that, living in communion with the Holy One, and filled with divine love and truth, I may have power to draw the ungodly from idolatry to worship at thy feet." Thus he prayed until sleep overpowered him, and he sank on the ground near that spot where Mary had wept in anguish by her expiring son.

While asleep, Clement, in vision, beheld a boundless plain, over which the sand was drifting in prodigious clouds. In a short time all became tranquil, and, through the lurid glare of the atmosphere, appeared a ruined city at the foot of a vast rock, sculptured in rich fantastic forms. The object that most rivetted his attention was a woman clothed in Arabian garments, kneeling at the city gate with extended arms, as if to implore his help; and as he gazed, a voice near him whispered: "She is the human soul, hasten to the sin-darkened clime of Edom." Amazed, Clement awoke; and, thinking of this strange vision, bent his footsteps towards the south. On the brink of the Dead Sea he lingered, and, in imagination, pictured the morn when the sun rose in glory, a calm rested upon the scene, and Lot,

* St. John, chap. iv. ver. 14.

with his family, entered Zoar. Then the fire of God descended on Sodom and Gomorrah—the Jordan rolled back her waters, and the affrighted people, vainly calling on the God they had despised, perished in the devouring flames.

Idumea, with her balm-dropping woods and fragrant groves, lay before him, and, impressed with an ardent desire to establish christianity, he entered that ancient land. He found in Petra a church of believers, for when Jerusalem was destroyed, many disciples, warned by their Saviour's words, fled thither and disseminated their holy faith. Still the grossest idolatry reigned throughout Edom, and few, compared with the great mass, received the truth. Carried on by a mysterious impulse, Clement pursued his way through valleys where gorgeous flowers perfumed the breeze, and fruits from every climate seemed collected. Idumea was not then dreary and untenanted. 'Tis true the glory of ancient times, when kings and princes reigned within her bounds, had passed away, yet it teemed with an industrious people and was the centre of Indian commerce; and philosophy still lingered within her groves.(?) Alas! how changed is Edom now; a modern traveller passing that lake in which the cities of the plain are entombed, beholds, stretched before him, a wide extended

desert more dreary in aspect than the mind can picture^(*); consisting of vast plains scattered over with thorny shrubs, barren rocks towering to heaven, and valleys on which the sun darts his burning rays, and the southern winds drift the sands of the Arabian gulf. No palms rise to shield the wanderer from the heat, no cooling streams allay his thirst; weary and spirit-broken his heart faints within him, and he sighs for his distant home. Towards the east the scene becomes more varied, —ruins of temples, Greek churches, paved roads, cisterns, Corinthian columns, and sepulchral remains, in sad confusion rise above the sands, and prove that Idumea was once the abode of civilized man. At length the traveller reaches, as Clement did, Mount Hor, and beholds, enclosed in pathless rocks, the once celebrated Petra^(*). Its only entrance is through a narrow defile, overhung with craggy precipices; which, once passed, the sublime beauties of the city burst upon his sight. The precipitous rocks which surround it on all sides are sculptured into colossal statues, or excavated into vast chambers, corridors, and temples. There also may be seen the sepulchres of successive generations—the lofty homes of the princes of Idumea; and traces of hanging gardens, far-famed in ancient days. So slightly has time changed many of the build-

ings that they appear fresh from the chisel (¹⁰), witness their style of architecture ranks them among the oldest in the world. No human being dwells in Petra: even the wandering Arab refuses to push his tent there, and the awful stillness is only broken by birds of prey screaming among the cliffs.

The modern traveller may wander by the rivine that anciently slaked the thirst of thousands, and as the morn gilds the amphitheatre, he may picture its bygone splendour when filled with the gay throng whose mirth once echoed among the rocks. The doleful screeching of the owl recalls to his recollection the words of the prophecy, pronounced when Idumea was in her zenith of prosperity. "My sword shall come down upon Idumea, upon the people of my curse to judgment. From generation to generation it shall lie waste; the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the owl and the raven shall dwell in it, and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof, and it shall be a habitation for dragons, and a court for owls. The wild

beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr (or goat) shall cry to his fellow ; the screech owl also shall rest there and find for herself a place of rest. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather, beneath her shadow ; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read, no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate, for my mouth it hath commanded and his spirit it hath gathered them. And he hath cast lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line : they shall possess it for ever and ever, from generation to generation they shall dwell therein." "Concerning Edom, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Is wisdom no more in Teman ? Is counsel perished from the prudent ? I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him the time that I will visit him." "Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken ; and art thou he that shall altogether go unpunished ? thou shalt not go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink it. I have sworn by myself, saith the Lord, that Bozrah (the strong city) shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a ruin ; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. Lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among

men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart. O thou, that dwellest in the clefts of the rocks, that holdest the height of the hill, though thou shouldest make thy nest high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith the Lord. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall the Son of Man dwell in it."

How plain is this prediction ! to the letter it has been fulfilled ! gradually the glory of Idumea faded, until even her name was forgotten, and, as age after age rolled on, no man visited this land. At length, an unbeliever* wandered thither, and by relating the traces of ancient magnificence he found there, confirmed, undesignedly, the truth of the Scriptures. Methinks had he opened the sacred book, and read o'er the grave of Petra her predicted doom, light must have penetrated the dark chambers of his heart, and in adoration he must have bowed to the Supreme Being.

Jehovah gave Idumea to Esau ; and his descendants, settling there, began to excavate their rocky homes. Kings and dukes reigned over it before Israel was a kingdom, and, as time flowed on, the opulence of Petra increased ; it teemed with the rich productions of the east, so that

* Volney.

every breeze was rich with sweets. Inhabited by an industrious people, it soon became a land of commerce⁽¹¹⁾; astronomy and other sciences were cultivated⁽¹²⁾; and from the sublime poetry of Job we may gather that the true worship of Jehovah was long retained. By degrees, prosperity made Idumea forgetful of God, and, like Babylon and Nineveh, in the pride of her heart she thought herself secure, nor heeded the warnings of Heaven.

The Jews are banished from Zion, yet in every clime

“ Tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast ”*

are met with, and all turning their thoughts with patriotic love towards Jerusalem. But no Edomite remains to think of the dwelling of his forefathers, for the race of Esau is extinct†⁽¹³⁾.

* Byron.

† Keith.

CHAPTER VI.

" Fondly, our spirits to our own
 Cling, nor to part allow ;
 Thine to some land forlorn has flown—
 We turn—and where art thou ?
 * * * *

Companion thou hast none ;
 The wild boughs wave above thy head,
 Yet still thou journey'st on ;
 Treading the tangled wild wood drear,
 Piercing the mountain glen,
 Till wearily thou drawest near
 The haunts of lonely men."

W. Howitt.

ONWARD, through the desert of Zin, Clement travelled until he came within sight of the city of Ameime⁽¹⁴⁾, and, in joyful surprise, perceived it was the same he had beheld in vision.

It was the hour of noon—the sun-beams shone gloriously upon the gardens and vineyards, and displayed the excavated dwellings towering height above height to the summit of the mountain. In the days of Idumean greatness, Ameime was the residence of kings, but had gradually sunk to decay, and when Clement arrived, many of the groves and vineyards were covered with encroaching sand.

"Welcome sight," exclaimed Clement, "blest city ! thou wilt be the seal of my ministry,—the resting-place of my weary feet. O'er the briny

ocean, through trackless forests and burning deserts, have I roamed a wanderer and alone; but here, with a kindred spirit, even the maiden whose image fills my soul, I shall find a home, and spend my life in leading these heathens to the paths of peace. God has sent me hither to establish a church, and watch over it with a father's care."

Clement loved Pauline, but had withheld from acknowledging his affection while he journeyed as a missionary; for his noble heart shrank from the probability of causing her to share in the hardships he endured. When in Petra he beheld the peaceful dwellings of christians, he had often sighed for one whose tenderness might fill the void of his heart, and in such moments, Pauline, though far away, seemed near, her smile, her voice of music cheered him, and he anticipated the hour when some unforeseen event might give him a settled home, and she would consent to be his own, beyond the fear of separation.

Hope was his solace, and inspired him with energy, as it ever does when an inmate of the heart. Alas! alas! for them who cannot cherish it, and as life rolls heavily along are tortured with despair.

A crowd of people moved along the road, and Clement, on approaching nearer, perceived they carried a wounded man. A young female lean-

ing over the bier, as they slowly bore him onward, sought, in soothing accents, to assuage his pain; and beautiful was the expression of his dark, penetrating eye, as he pressed her hand in token of his gratitude.

Clement followed to the home of the sufferer, and learned, from a bystander, that the accident was caused by a portion of rock, which he was excavating, falling suddenly: two of his companions were killed, and he barely escaped with life. Making his way through the crowd, Clement addressed the female, sympathized in her affliction, and assured her he would endeavour to restore her husband. He then examined the Idumean's wounds, and, taking from his girdle a packet of herbs, applied remedies which long experience proved were efficacious.

Day and night, while the sufferer hovered between life and death, he attended him with assiduity, and endeavoured to instil into his mind the doctrines of Jesus. He gradually recovered, and health diffused its inspiring influence through his frame. Clement, he viewed as the preserver of his life, and his wife wept tears of gratitude, and implored the gods to grant him their blessing.

"Friends," answered Clement, "leave the false gods of your country, and adore Jehovah, the true God, who only hath power to bless. Abra-

ham, and the mighty men your traditions celebrate, bowed before his throne: the princes who dwelt in yonder palaces, whose bones have mouldered in the sepulchres around, worshiped him; and, had your fathers preserved the simplicity of their faith, the glory of Edom would never have declined. When the inhabitants of Edom forsook the Lord, they turned to idols, and gradually became corrupt in life, so that the prosperity that sprang from the possession of the truth, and a life of obedience to its injunctions, by degrees declined. Sin is the destroyer of the nations, and not the anger of Jehovah, for he is Mercy, and even to the ungodly extends his love. Return, therefore, to the Almighty, and cease to reverence idols; you will then possess that true happiness the sorrows of earth cannot destroy. There is a place beyond the precincts of the grave, where pain, anguish, or contending passions wither not the spirit; where space no longer separates friends, and time is not measured by the flight of hours. No deadly plant, or poisonous reptile pollutes its bowers, for angels, purified from mortal stains, are its inhabitants, and the scenery is beautiful as their pure hearts. That spiritual world will be your home throughout eternity, if ye love Jehovah with sincerity, and obey his commands."

Such language won the hearts of the Edomites, and when they spoke of Clement to their associates, a vast number of attentive listeners gathered round him, and he had the satisfaction of soon beholding many become disciples of the cross.

Fearing he would leave them, they intreated him to be their pastor, and make Ameime his home. He consented joyfully, and, after baptizing the converts, and leaving the Edomite who had been wounded to fill his place while away, he returned to Antioch for his beloved Pauline.

Alas ! how soon is the sky of earthly bliss overcast. Sweet anticipation accelerated Clement's footsteps, and, buoyant with hope, he had entered Antioch. Reaching the house where the widow dwelt, he found it desolate, and in vain he sought to learn tidings of her or Pauline; until, after wandering about till weary, his melancholy forebodings were confirmed by a christian, who told him the widow was dead, and the young Roman, after lingering some days near the abode of her departed friend, had vanished from the city, whither he knew not.

Clement sought the lost one in the suburbs, and adjacent villages, and even when hope left his breast, he remained in Antioch, as if influenced by some mysterious power. Each spot

reminded him of by-gone hours : the hill where they had watched the brilliant sunset, and conversed of the spiritual world it typifies ; the house where he had seen her weep at the tale of another's woe ; and the spot whence her heavenly tones had ascended in hymns to Jehovah, were sacred to the past, and Antioch seemed to him the dearest place on earth.

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CHAPTER VII.

" Art thou then desolate ?
Of friends, of hopes forsaken ?—Come to me,
I am thine own."

Anon.

ONE evening, Clement strolled heedlessly to the ruin where he first saw Pauline, and throwing himself on the grass, reviewed in memory the hours he had passed with her, and his blighted hopes.

The rich notes of a plaintive song came with the breeze down the streamlet, and listening breathlessly, the young missionary caught the last verse :

" Sorrow-stricken, reft of home,
Friendless doom'd o'er earth to roam,
Lord, to thee I turn my eye ;
Watch thy child, be ever nigh ;
If thy will, O God of love !
Waft me to thy heav'n above ;
Where blissful souls from earth set free,
Enjoy their immortality."

The song ceased, but not before Clement recognized the voice of the Roman girl, and plunging across the stream, he found the object of his solicitude by her father's grave.

The moon shone on his face, as hearing footsteps approaching, she raised her head, and uttering a faint scream of joy, on perceiving

who it was. She was the next moment weeping on his neck. Pressing her with frantic ardour to his heart, he exclaimed, "At last—at last, my own beloved one, we have met;—precious moment; now I am rewarded for the sufferings—the pangs of absence; weep on, poor girl! thy life has been a troubled scene; lean upon a heart whose simplest thought is thine, and unfold thy sorrows. I have found thee, and though robbed of each earthly hope, alone, and in poverty, thou hast been guarded by the eye of heaven, and heaven has ordered our meeting. Consent, Pauline, to be my own; flee with me to a sheltering place—a home, where, in weal and woe, in youth and age, my love shall be thy solace. I have prayed for, and long anticipated, this hour. When on the barren waste I felt alone, echoes of the past, sweet whisperings of the future, cheered me; though far away, thou wast in spirit near, for distance is a feeble barrier to part consociated minds, and love, like some guardian seraph, ever in temptation's hour kept me true to thee. Destroy not my bliss by a cold refusal, but tell me I have not loved thee thus in vain." Pauline confessed her heart was already his, and freely gave her plighted faith, for her confidence in his purity of heart banished reserve.

Brightly the sun shone on the happy pair as the good bishop of Antioch, a few days afterwards, bestowed on them his blessing, and wished them God speed, after their marriage ; but still brighter from their dark eyes beamed forth the bliss reigning in their hearts.

Theirs was that union of spirits, that true marriage, which, to the good, is an antepast of heaven, and typifies the eternal union of Christ and his church.

Their love was ardent,—pure, and raised their thoughts to heaven, its native land, whose very atmosphere is love,—whose simplest flower receives its tints from love.

Few are the spirits on earth, in which love blooms in all its freshness, for, like an exotic, it needs a genial sky ; the blighting influence of sin withers it.

“ Love indeed is light from Heaven ;
A spark of that immortal fire
With angels shared, by Alla given,
To lift from earth our low desire.
* * * *

A feeling from the Godhead caught,
To wean from self each sordid thought ;
A ray of him who form'd the whole ;
A glory circling round the soul.”*

Gladness filled Ameime when Clement and his bride entered ; many an enthusiastic welcome was given them, and gifts were presented in honor of their nuptials.

CHAPTER VIII.

"I have seen
Hours dreadful, and things strange; but this sore sight
Has trifled former knowings."

Shakspeare.

SWIFTLY and imperceptibly years rolled away; in prosperity, the wheels of time appear not tardy: age began to silver the ebon locks of Pauline, and bow the lofty figure of Clement; yet calmness reigned within their breasts. No vain regret or wish for the return of vanished hours, disturbed their peace, each regarded life on earth as the season of probation—the journey to a heavenly home, and though content to stay their appointed time below, still, like a bird with pinions ever ready to soar aloft, they awaited the summons to depart.

Clement had dwelt as a father among the Idumeans, consoling the wounded spirit, raising the despondent, and teaching them the truths and promises of the gospel, which, to the spiritually-minded, are messages of peace. His faithful partner participated in his zealous efforts, and cheered him by unvarying affection. His sons assisted in his ministerial duties, and his daughter, the young and lovely Alethea, like an angel of

kindness diffused by her visits of consolation, the calm sunshine of peace through hearts where sorrow dwelt. The aged loved to hear her light step cross their threshold, and children, as she passed along, would leave their pastimes and run to welcome her. She was the child of the city,—all loved her as their own and spake her praise.

The storm of persecution had long been sweeping over Idumea, and her cities were deluged with christian blood. Ameime enjoyed comparative tranquility: sometimes a rumbling of the far-off thunder reached the desert city, and excited among its inhabitants, a feeling of deep commiseration for their suffering brethren, but it passed away.

One day, tidings came that a company of horsemen were crossing the sands, and soon afterwards a legion of Roman soldiers, accompanied by several pagan priests, entered Ameime.

Confusion spread through every street; for the christians well knew on what purpose they were come. Alas ! their fears were fearfully confirmed.

When the mandate of the emperor Severus, for the massacre of all adhering to the new Faith, was publicly read, the soldiers, urged on by the priests, entered the christian dwellings, and began their work of slaughter. Neither age nor sex were spared; numbers were thrown

from the rocky eminences, and lay mangled corpses in the streets ; and when night closed upon the scene, groans of agony, and prayers of the dying, mingled with the boisterous revelry of the carousing soldiers, and echoed among the cliffs.

Concealed by the darkness, many christians fled to a cavern, which, in peaceful times, was their place of worship, resolving to perish on the spot whence their praises had risen to the courts of heaven. Their pastor resolved to join them. Gathering his family round him, he prayed that they might be strengthened in this time of trial ; then embracing his beloved partner and Alethea, he prepared to depart with his two sons, and their young Athenian friend, Irenæus. Still they lingered in that chamber, each feeling it was the last time they should meet on earth, and when, at last, they bade farewell, Alethea fell upon her mother's neck, and shed tears of fond affection. "Take courage, my child," said Pauline, "God, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, will not deal harshly with thee."

"I know he will not and I have confidence in his love, but oh ! my mother, thou art in danger, and my father, brothers, Irenæus, and our dear friends may be slain ; many are already gone, I dare not think of their fate—it is awful—it distracts me, yet my mind will—oh, it will dwell

upon the thought!" and shuddering at the remembrance of their sufferings, she hid her face on her mother's breast, and, clinging closely to her parent, seemed to feel safe on that bosom where in hours of happiness her head had been pillowed.

Faint streaks of day shot across the cavern, through the numerous fissures, and seemed to make the spots gloomier where the light could not penetrate.

Clement partook with the assembled christians, the emblems of the Saviour's death. Many anxious thoughts for his absent wife and daughter crossed his mind, but were repelled by the reflection, that they were employed in consoling the sufferers sheltered beneath his roof, and that God's protecting power would overshadow them, and impart strength in the hour of need.

A scream from without interrupted the worshippers, and, instantly, Alethea, pale, and almost breathless with terror entered, exclaiming, "They have slain my mother and our sick friends—our home is in flames!—they are coming hither—hark! it is their voices that I hear—God protect thy children." The cavern seemed to swim round: she fainted, and, had not the Athenian caught her, she would have fallen on the ground,

Her brothers rushed towards the entrance, and were met by the soldiers, some of whom bore lighted torches. The little band of christians gathered round Clement to shield him; vain were their efforts, first, his sons, and then, one by one, the faithful fell, till none remained except Clement, Irenæus, and the still senseless Alethea. The centurion leader of the soldiers raised his sword, reeking with Christian blood, to slay Clement; at that moment, the light of the torches fell on Irenæus, and, as if bound by some mysterious spell, the centurion paused,—the weapon fell from his grasp, and in silence he gazed upon him. What was there in that noble brow or expressive eye to overawe the murderer, whose heart could but little appreciate the treasury of thought, and the heavenly tranquillity embodied there? In Irenæus, he recognized his early friend, and the sunny days of boyhood—days when his heart was unstained by guilt, seemed to rush back with their joyous, soul-stirring feelings.

“Irenæus, my friend, my more than brother, we have met at last,” he exclaimed; “dost thou remember me, or has the lapse of years erased Philetus from thy mind?” “I remember thee,” returned Irenæus, “and with sorrow; would that oblivion’s veil were thrown o’er the

happy past, or thou hadst slept with thy fathers, ere ambition had enticed thee to persecute the servants of my God. Fulfil thy task, and number me with my martyred fellows ; but, Philetus, if there remains in thy breast one grain of the generous pity that once ennobled it, spare this maiden and her parent."

"Forbear, Irenæus," said Philetus ; "no drop of Christian blood shall be shed by me, now thou art one. 'Tis true I hate the accursed sect, but the ties of friendship are sacred." At a glance from him, his men withdrew, and while the friends conversed, the silence of that dread vault was broken only by their voices, and the low moans of some expiring christians.

At night, a man might be seen leading three fleet coursers through the deserted streets, He paused,—listened to the carousing soldiers,—gazed on the dead bodies dimly visible around, then, heaving a deep sigh, passed slowly forward. His mind was evidently ill at ease, and he thought within himself : What does this vain dream of ambition yield me ? what can it ever yield ? will the smile of the emperor, the applause of the multitude, the gaiety and splendour of a court bring calmness to my soul : restless, restless mortal, the only unhappy creature in creation, always panting after distant good, which, when attained,

dissatisfies; for what purpose and from what source is thine existence? These christians regard life on earth as the germ of some future state expanding beyond the grave; they speak of one omniscient and all-powerful God, and of an eternity of glory; and, founding their hopes of immortality on his goodness, and the supposed resurrection of one Jesus, despise our threats and endure with patience excruciating tortures. A shadowy faith could scarce impart courage firm as theirs, nor would Irenæus embrace an erroneous creed." Again, he paused, and had not one thought crossed his mind, might have become a christian, that thought was of one in the sunny land of Egypt, whose beauty had won his heart, whom he loved with all the wild passion of his ardent nature, and to obtain whose hand was mounting the hill of fame: compared with her affection, virtue, heaven, and truth itself, appeared so trifling, that his indecision vanished: he remained a persecutor. Thus does the mysterious influence of some absent being, ignorant, perchance, of the possession of such power, often determine the mind, for good or evil, as if there existed a union between souls—an invisible connexion of spirit with spirit.

Leaving the town, Philetus led the horses over a craggy steep, and along a passage border-

ing on the desert. A faint light streamed from a cavity in the rock ; on reaching it, he stopped, and shortly after, Irenæus sprang through the opening which communicated with the cavern before named, saluted his friend, and then, assisted the pastor and Alethea to descend.

“ I have chosen three of our swiftest Arab steeds,” said Philetus, “ to carry you across the desert, and provided water and food for your journey; Egypt is tranquil, flee thither, and may you dwell in safety.

The christians turned to express their gratitude, but Philetus was gone, and they were alone.

Such were the sufferings, to which the early followers of Jesus were exposed : they preceded us, like pioneers, to smoothen Truth’s rugged path ; their heart’s blood softened the stony ground, and o’er their mangled corpses, the vineyard of our God has grown.

Theirs was no visionary faith, but an assurance, raising them superior to affliction, blunting the keen edge of pain, supporting them in death. Theirs was a hope, shining brightly in the gloomiest hour, a charity extended even to their murderers.

The name of christian, in those days, comprised all that could dignify or ennoble man, was

a title far more illustrious than wealth or rank could bestow; for it belonged to a sincere and truth-loving band, who were ready to resign all that hitherto had made life desirable; and who practised self-denying virtue, looking forward to a home beyond the grave. To be a christian then, required unflinching courage: for the heavenly doctrines of the gospel were at variance with existing systems, and the sword and the flame were its attendants in every clime. Hard, indeed, must be the heart that can hear of their excruciating sufferings, without a glow of love for Him, in whose cause martyrs suffered, and who sustained them through the whole.

Their names were branded with infamy, atrocious crimes laid to their charge, torn from friends, tortured, broken on the wheel, imprisoned, till the eye became dim, and the frame powerless. They were burned over lingering fires; and many in the proud city of the Seven Hills, were coated with pitch and other combustibles, and placed at night in the imperial gardens, as lamps illumining the darkness. Yet, though oppressed, they were triumphant: their material bodies perished, but angels wafted their faithful souls to the blissful region of spirits.

We need not wonder christianity was opposed,

if we reflect how depraved the human race were at the period of the Redeemer's advent. Not only the lower classes, but philosophers, entertained most absurd ideas ; each slight trace of Pagan virtue seemed obliterated, and, at the very foot of the monarch's throne, crimes of blackest dye were committed, unattended by punishment or remorse. Here and there, the solitary voice of one less hardened was raised against the tide of vice, but the poisoned chalice or murderer's knife, at once silenced such reproof in the grave.

Every mind acquainted with the history of the lives of those who succeeded the illustrious Alexander : the ignorance and stupidity of God's chosen race, the Jews ; the cruelties of the western nations and of the barbarians of the north, will acknowledge that earth groaned beneath her children's guilt—the night of sin had reached its noon, and nothing less than the mandate of Jehovah could dispel its gloom. Amid this midnight darkness the splendour of celestial truth burst forth—the long promised Messiah appeared, and, by his blameless life, his miraculous powers, his fortitude in maintaining his opinions through persecution and death, showed the world he was divinely inspired and came to lead mankind from vice to virtue—from idols to the True God,

the knowledge of whose existence had been gradually lost. Ill did his sublime doctrines, his poverty and heavenly meekness, accord with the prevailing sensuality. The pharisaical Jews scorned his humble birth and association with the poor; kings, mistaking his spiritual for an earthly kingdom, trembled on their thrones; and idolators refused to worship an invisible God.

But the chief cause of the persecutions raised against christianity was, that the worshipers of Jupiter could join in the rites paid to Isis; those of Osiris could worship Diana; and, in fact, each Pagan system permitted its votaries to reverence the gods of the various religions; but christians adored none other than Jehovah, and even refused to enter the temple of an idol; which convinced the heathens, that if christianity triumphed idolatry must perish, and for that reason they united in opposing it, their common enemy.

Yet onward rapidly it rolled like the swelling tide of ocean, and still will roll till every heart returns its maker's love, and the day gloriously dawns, when earth, beautiful as at creation, "shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord," and be once more a paradise of bliss. Blest age! period long anticipated! we welcome thy approach, and with delight behold thy harbingers, Liberty and Education, travelling to every land.

CHAP. IX.

“ Forgive, forgive, even should our full hearts break ;
The broken heart thou wilt not, Lord, despise.
Ah ! thou art still too gracious to forsake,
Though thy strong hand so heavily chastise.”

Mûman.

HITHERTO Alethea's life had been one of cloudless bliss ; but the scene had suddenly changed. Her mother, brothers, and many friends, endeared to her by their piety, had been slain in her presence ; Ameime, where her childhood passed so brightly, was her home no more, and o'er the pathless desert she must roam. The weight of so much sorrow would, to her young heart, have been insupportable, if she had not possessed strong faith in the love and wisdom of Jehovah. She knew her heavenly Father beheld her, and for some wise purpose had permitted each care, and that knowledge sustained her. She reflected, too, how numerous were the blessings she still possessed—she had liberty ; her father and Irenæus were alive and near, to cheer her on her journey, and there was hope of finding, with the christians of Egypt, a peaceful home. When mounted on a fleet courser, she glanced upon the silent desert and felt assured she was no longer

in danger of death, fear vanished, and the tumult of her mind subsided into a calmness. None would more readily have died in the cause of truth than Alethea; but, that instinctive clinging to existence which God has implanted in the heart, caused her to rejoice at her escape.

Were it not for this love of life, many whose souls are weighed down by sorrow, and destitute of the consolations of religion, would rush headlong to destruction; but, influenced by this strong feeling, they recoil from the idea of dissolution, even when earth seems robbed of every power to please and time rolls wearily along. I have watched its different manifestations; causing some persons, in whom this propensity is powerful, to flee away, like the disciples of Jesus, at the sudden approach of danger, or be terrified at even the thought of death;—nor are we alone in this, for the lower animals cling as tenaciously to existence as ourselves. Their helplessness claims our protection; yet, alas, it is seldom given. When the noble horse has exhausted his strength in the service of man, and with silent eloquence asks for rest, the whip is employed to its panting sides, and laden with a burden, it is goaded on by its christian, benevolent, merciful master. When the cattle have given their nutritious milk, the flocks their fleece, man,—dissatis-

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fied man, insensible to pity, slaughters them to gratify his pampered appetite. God permits this cruelty, as he permits other evils to darken earth, but he wills it not.

When the travellers had journeyed some distance, Irenæus perceived his faithful dog bounding across the desert ; the noble creature had wandered about the city in search of his master, until scent led him to the cavern, and thence to the desert, where, afar off, he saw the christians. Faint streaks of light spread o'er the east, the heavens assumed a brilliant rose colour, and the sun arose in glory. Beautiful beyond description was the place the christians entered, being a deep ravine, surrounded by towering hills, crowned to their summits with luxuriant shrubs ; alternately thick clumps of arrah and acacia trees, the oleander, with its crescents of lovely flowers, and the rich foliage of the fig were visible, and many an eastern plant of gorgeous hue expanded its blossoms to the returning sun. Hawks, vultures, and numerous other birds, flew aloft uttering their piercing alarm notes, as the wanderers approached ; and the wild sublimity of the scene was heightened by a little stream which, issuing from a cleft in a rock, fell with a refreshing and soothing sound into the valley beneath.

Beautiful, too, was Alethea, as she gracefully

rode her Arab steed, and patted its arched and shining neck as it stopped to crop the herbage: the long ringlets of raven hair, which fell on her shoulders, floated in the morning breeze; and her complexion of marble whiteness, was slightly flushed with excitement; her girlish form and face seemed the embodiment of angel purity, and Irenæus regarded her as the loveliest of earth's daughters.

After they had with difficulty mounted a steep ascent, the landscape entirely changed. Far as the eye could reach, lay extended, a dreary plain of heavy sand and flintstones. The few stunted trees, and thorny plants, scattered over it, grew thinner and thinner, and even these, soon disappeared, and nothing but barren, tractless sand was visible. "We have now, truly entered the wilderness," said Clement, "and must prepare for its horrors; may the God of Israel guide and strengthen thee, especially, my gentle Alethea."

"Look father," said Alethea, "at that enormous flock of vultures, hovering round an object, dimly visible upon the plain; more, and still more, are flying from the distant horizon; how dolefully their cries fall on the ear!" "Yes, my child," returned Clement, "but were it not for the presence of those birds, the air in some re-

gions, would become too pestiferous, for man to breathe. Attracted either by scent, or some mysterious instinct, they readily discover the dead, and are thus truly called the scavengers of the wilderness.

As they came nearer, they perceived the vultures were gathered over the body of a camel, whose low moan, as the voracious creatures flapped their wings, and screamed around, proved life was not extinct ; another object, shocked the christians still more, even the mangled corpse of a human being, torn completely limb from limb : the tattered articles of apparel, scattered about identified him as a huntsman of the desert, who must have fallen, exhausted with fatigue, and thus became a banquet for the vultures, ere they attacked the dying camel.

Shuddering at this awful sight, the little party turned away, and a train of dismal thoughts ran through each breast.

Alethea remembered the fate of her mother, and brothers, and the impossibility of seeing them again on earth, then she glanced, into the far off future, and sought to scan her own fate in days to come, till looking on her father, over whose frame, recent afflictions had wrought the work of years, she became overwhelmed with the conviction, he also would soon be taken

from her. Irenæus perceiving Clement remained silent, and immersed in thought, drew near, and kindly enquired the cause. "My son," said the pilgrim, dashing a tear from his care worn cheek; "before yonder lamp of day has journeyed seven times through the heavens, my body will be as that we have just passed. I feel within me, the unmistakable symptoms of coming death, and much as I desire to lay aside this terrestrial body, and dwell in freedom with the glorified spirits of my beloved ones, with the angels round the heavenly throne, and with the God I adore, sad thoughts of the loneliness of Alethea, when I am dead, disturb my mind. Not only in the desert, but even in fruitful climes, she will be poor and unprotected; simple hearted, innocent, and beautiful as she is, I tremble at the trials that may await her;" then lifting his eyes to heaven, expressively he prayed: "Oh God, who hast in *love* created all creatures, behold, from thine eternal throne, my child: when I am gone be thou her father, let thine arms of mercy shield her from danger, and grant she may ever continue faithful unto thee." Irenæus was deeply affected, and pressing the hand of Clement, assured him he would watch over Alethea with a brothers' care, and not leave her until she was safe in some secure retreat. So plunged in

thought were they, that the increasing heat was unnoticed as they rode listlessly along, till Irenæus, awaking from his reverie, looked back, and turning suddenly on the saddle, exclaimed, "the sand wind! the sand wind! Clement, Alethea, we are lost!" Springing from their horses, they fell prostrate, with their faces in the sand; one moment more, the surface of the plain was lifted in huge billows, like some vast ocean: a cloud of burning sand rushed over the travellers, and covered them and their horses. When Irenæus extricated himself, he beheld Alethea's horse at some distance, without its rider, pawing the ground, and, with extended nostrils and blood-shot eyes, writhing beneath the effects of the sand. The dog was smelling about in every direction, and soon barking loudly, bounded towards his master, then returned to the same spot, and began scratching among the sand; Irenæus alighted and joined in the efforts of the sagacious animal, till he discovered the lifeless body of the maiden, beneath the surface. Raising her in his arms, he wiped the sand from her face, bathed her brow and hands in water, and poured a small quantity between her livid lips. Her father approached, and after some time of anxious suspense, she gradually revived, the colour rushed back to her soft cheeks, and she smiled sweetly

on her friends, thanking them for their care. Irenæus led the horse, still trembling and exhausted, to the maiden, and assisting her to mount, they again commenced their journey. Vain were the attempt to picture the sufferings of the succeeding days. The pathless sand surrounding them, was scorched by the burning sun, and, like a brazen arch, the sky glared above them; no sign of life was visible, except occasionally a caravan of merchants would skirt the horizon, then vanish in the distance. Thus the weary hours passed, till life became a burden, and each regarded death as a messenger of rest. Towards noon, one day, a cheering prospect seemed to promise speedy succour. Far off appeared a limpid stream, whose rippling waves glittered in the sunshine; on its banks, in all the wild luxuriance of nature, grew dates and other eastern trees, graceful gazelles drank at its brink, numerous birds were skimming across the surface, and a flock of sheep grazed quietly, attended by a shepherd who reclined upon a grassy mound. Delighted at the unexpected sight, the christians urged forward their horses; but soon, in the bitterness of disappointment, discovered their mistake, for it was the mirage that had misled them. Often it thus deceives the traveller, by picturing shady groves and cool refreshing waters;

where all surrounding objects are so completely at variance with the common feelings of humanity, and neither animal or vegetable life is found, man's imagination assumes a spiritual tone, and busy fancy paints scenes of fertility, or recalls the forms of the long-lamented dead.

The situation of the christians became distressing in the extreme ; the supply of water and food given by Philetus was expended. Clement's horse sank beneath him, exhausted, on the plain, injuring him in its fall, and the other two, paced slowly along, almost unable, to carry their afflicted riders.

Towards the close of another painful day, guided by a pelican, they came within sight of the fountain, mentioned in our first chapter. The horses expanded their nostrils to receive the first scent of water, and, raising their beautifully arched necks, sprang forward with a lighter step. Joy irradiated the countenances of their riders, and, for the moment, past misery was forgotten, and looking upward with an earnestness that seemed to penetrate boundless space, they, with united impulse, adored Jehovah for their delivery. Vital praise—the spontaneous breathing forth of gratitude was theirs, and when they reached the verdant spot, and knelt upon its grassy floor, they felt in spirit at His throne who gazes down

futurity, and marks the path each mortal treads from the hour of birth till his soul sleeps on the bosom of eternity. How wonderful is the omniscience, the omnipresence of Jehovah ! Among the worlds glittering like diamonds in the heavens he moves ; the flight of summer birds to warmer lands he orders ; and views each insect sporting in the sunbeams ! On man, his last, best work, he lavishes unbounded love, gives him an earth of beauty, a soul to gain bliss from every source, and the anticipation of an endless existence. Yet, though we know he has promised, he "will never leave, nor forsake us," "that even as a father pitieth his children, so he pities those that love him," though we are amazed at his power, overawed at his truth and love, we fear to rely implicitly upon him. If our hopes are blighted, our sky of prosperity o'ercast, our prayers apparently unanswered, mistrust disturbs our confidence, and forgetful that, compared with Jehovah, man is as the dew-drop to the ocean—the glow-worm to the sun ; we, in such moments, conceive he cannot grant us all we ask for, and, in anger, turn away to follow the bent of our foolish hearts.

Alethea gathered fruit, and presented it, with a draught of water to her parent, then she smoothed with her fair hands, his dishevelled hair, and with all the arts of pure affection, administered

to his wants. A melancholy smile o'erspread Clement's countenance, and kissing her brow, as she sat upon the ground beside him, he folded her to his heart, and his overwrought feelings found relief in prayer, saying: "Lord, thou hast been my guide through life's uneven way, and hast crowned my labours in thy vineyard with success: the partner of my joys and sorrows, and my three noble boys, thou hast wafted to a brighter world. One boon, one only, would I ask, even that my pilgrimage on earth may be prolonged, till this gentle lamb, my Alethea, is sheltered from the perils of the desert, or the cruelty of man; then shall I in peace lie down, and sleep the sleep of death."

A long silence followed; Alethea was weeping upon his breast, and he, with a prophet's eye, thinking of her future lot.

As the lamp of day sank in the west, they watched its course till night threw her mantle o'er the desert. Irenæus joined them, and intreated Clement to repose in a tent he had erected, from the materials given by Philetus. "I thank thee, my son," he said, "but the night wind is so welcome to my burning brow, that I will remain here. To pass the hours of night, with no other shelter than the arch of heaven, seems to recall the period, when, with the en-

thusiasm of youth, I travelled from land to land, diffusing the gospel of Jesus; life's journey is now drawing to its close, and soon I shall leave this lower world to dwell in one of cloudless light."

CHAPTER X.

"I give thee to thy God!—the God that gave thee,
A well-spring of deep gladness to my heart!
And precious as thou art,
And pure as dew of Hermon, He shall have thee
My own, my beautiful, my undefiled!
And thou shalt be His child!"

Mrs. Hemans.

"He suffered—but his pangs are o'er."

Montgomery.

AT early morn, a strain of music trembled among the surrounding palms, then rose, and swelled, and died away within the solitude. It was the hymn breathed by the Christians, welcoming the dawning of the sabbath. Vibrating to the touch of sincere devotion, they poured forth a song, so melodious, so thrilling, that it seemed like the music-tones of a brighter, purer world.

On that small verdant spot, from which no living thing was visible—and all around was a trackless, awful wilderness, they felt as if no longer citizens of earth, but inhabitants of that fairer clime, where, unshackled by the shell of clay, mind freely wafts aspirations to the Deity, and unites in eternal love and friendship with kindred angels. As hour after hour of the sabbath glided past, the christians breathed un-

ceasing prayer. Each soul that feels God is omnipresent, and owns him as Father, is engaged in this holy office, even when the tongue is silent, and the hands employed in labours of industry. No consecrated temple spreads its roof of marble above them, or echoed their voices through its aisles, but the isolated spot of earth they stood upon was not less holy, because unconsecrated by man. God's temple is the universe, and the holiest place, where the purest devotion ascends like incense to his throne; in beauty He has decked our earth to be a paradise of praise, and at the creation pronounced all good. At the summit of Mount Olivet, the house of Mary, and the well of Samaria, Jesus preached; the synagogue, the prison, and the sea-side, were the temples of his first and purest followers; never, till the period when christianity became corrupt, and blended with paganism, was a house of worship considered more holy by the consecration of man. So entirely spiritual was the tone of Clement's mind, that, during the devotions of that sabbath, he felt raised above his infirmities, and seemed to enjoy again the vigour of departed days; but soon nature sunk exhausted, and symptoms of approaching death were manifest. "My children," said Clement, "I would, if possible, once again com-

memorate on earth the death of our Saviour. Bread and wine, the usual emblems, we have not, but fruit of the fig, and pure water from the fountain, if received with sincere devotion, will be equally acceptable to Jehovah." Seated on the green turf of that oasis, the christians fulfilled the last command of the dying Jesus, conversed together on his sufferings, his victory over sin, and glorious resurrection, and prayed for grace to be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect. Methinks if our Eternal Parent can ever feel increase of joy, it is on beholding man,—the topmost link of creation's chain—the being formed by Him to be the recipient of his own exhaustless love, ascend, as those believers did, in spirit above the vanities of earth, to adore Him in simplicity and truth.

It is the inward worship he desires: outward ceremonies, deeds of self-denial, and even charity, are lifeless, if the heart is still below. When love, the main-spring of real devotion, casts its hallowing influence o'er the soul, prayer rises from the heart spontaneously without the aid of studied forms, stated hours, or consecrated buildings. If the simple fact, that God is a spirit, and must be worshiped in spirit, were more generally known, bigotry would vanish, and mankind, ceasing to regard those only of a

peculiar sect entitled to salvation, would believe that the faithful of every creed receive a blessing from Jehovah—that all souls are radically equal, and therefore, each, however mean his earthly condition, is worthy of the name of Brother.

Vainly Alethea endeavoured to hide the tears that chased each other down her cheeks, as she witnessed the feebleness of her parent, and knew, that although his brow was apparently placid, he was racked with torturing pain, and soon, perchance, she must behold him breathe his last. Clement saw her grief, and turning towards her with a look of ineffable sweetness, kissed her, and said, "My child, my dearest Alethea, be not troubled at the prospect of my death; all who sleep in Jesus will be happy, therefore, we can hope soon to meet again: anxiously I desired to remain below, to shield thee on these barren sands from harm, but God decrees otherwise, and his will be done. I confide thee, with confidence, to Irenæus; he will be kind as a brother, so, my child, thou art not lonely as was thy mother; friendless in a foreign land, she witnessed her father's death, heard him on the brink of the grave, blaspheme Jehovah, and shrunk at the prospect of his dreadful immortality. In that dark moment, she was desolate, uncheered by the voice of sympathy, the presence of a friend.

4

Yet her Heavenly Father knowing all she was about to suffer, guided my footsteps to the lone chamber, lest her weight of sorrow should be too heavy. Trust in Jehovah's goodness, Alethea, he will be with thee, as with thy angel mother, and, to compensate for the loss of me, will bestow some other blessing. Brief will be our separation, for life is a short and troubled dream ; to thy young heart it seemeth otherwise, but when, from the threshold of eternity, thou shalt look, like me, down bygone years, it will seem the recollection of a feverish vision. Care not for sorrow, soon, like joy, it passes away, and is a precious medicine to the soul. Arm thyself with fortitude, for severe trials await thee ; be prepared for affliction and death, remembering Jesus loves thee, hath power to give thee strength in every danger, and, having himself suffered and felt the infirmities of our nature, can judge of thy affliction, and with infinite love and wisdom support thee. I fear not death, but welcome its approach as the harbinger of peace, for although, on reviewing the past, my best actions and thoughts appear tinged with imperfection, yet, the God of boundless mercy will accept my sincere repentance, and admit me into the mansions of the just. Rejoice, then, with me, Alethea ; soon I shall be free. Like a leaf upon a stream—a meteor in the sky, is man : on earth

his imprisoned soul sighs for freedom, like a bird that flutters round its cage, yearning to expand its golden wings in liberty. While in this house of clay, our views of immortality and God are imperfect, we but dimly see the eternal glories in store; and only when the portal of the grave unfolds, and we stand ready for our flight from earth, have a prospect of what Jehovah has prepared for those that love him. Around us, though invisible to mortals, is the home of spirits—the heaven of rest: angels guard man's pilgrimage below, and wait to waft him to the skies. I see them clad in light, and sweetly their songs of praise fall on my ear. Like the sun of earth, only more glorious, Jehovah shines in heaven, diffusing to its utmost bounds, light that never fadeth, warmth that refreshes, and enhances even the bliss of heaven." His voice became weaker, till the words died on his lips inaudible; and, leaning on the breast of Irenæus, he sank insensible:—he was still alive, and reviving, he pointed towards the west, and said: "See, the light is fading!—there is the token of my death—when the last gleam of sunset gilds the loftiest palm, my soul will wing swiftly to its Redeemer's bosom." He spent some time in prayer, then laying his trembling hands on the head of Irenæus and Alethea, he looked upward

and said, "Lord Jehovah, protect these thy children from all evil ; keep their hearts pure, raise their thoughts to heaven, and finally receive them into the realms of bliss." His hands felt powerless ; he appeared still engaged in prayer. The dew of death lay on his forehead, and he breathed with difficulty. "Farewell, Irenæus—farewell, Alethea," he murmured ; a faint shudder passed through his frame—and all was over. Gently as an infant falls asleep on its mother's breast, he sank to rest, and there was a smile, like a signal of peace, round his mouth, even in death.

Such was the peaceful departure of this faithful servant of God. During a long life he had laboured unceasingly to diffuse the pure faith of Jesus ; and, like his divine master, had patiently endured tribulation and persecution ; and regarding this life as the beginning of existence,—the season of trial, he had lived as a pilgrim, whose home and treasure-house was in a better world. The sun's departing ray faded from the palms, and night veiled the desert. Through the midnight hours, Alethea wept o'er her parent's corpse ; to her, the last link of love's chain seemed broken, and existence cheerless as the surrounding sand.

By degrees, her mind became more tranquil.

Bright thoughts of her father's increased happiness, and that as her guardian angel he might be watching near, thoughts too of God's protection, lessened her weight of grief, and the consoling voice of Irenæus was balm to her wounded spirit. Seated near her, he would say, "Remember, Alethea, the expression of the holy Paul, 'concerning them which are asleep, sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.' Think also of the words of the apostle John, who heard a voice in heaven, saying, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' The voices of departed friends seem to whisper the same to our spirits, and inviting us to their home, say, 'mourn not child of earth; rejoice at our bliss—pace the road we have trod, and hasten to our blest abode. Come up hither, in spirit, on the sabbath—in the quiet eventide—the early morn, and meditate on Jehovah's goodness. Come up, in thought, in prosperous hours—when friends are false—when trouble lowers—when death is near, behold the guardian angels of your path—inhalé love, which, like the atmosphere, fills heaven,

and view the mansions where we dwell.' The same voice peals throughout the universe, from the bird's upward glance while drinking at the streamlet—the lotus expanding to greet the first ray of her God, and the eagle soaring high towards heaven. The moon, with her quiet beams, the glorious lamp of light, the glittering stars, all exclaim, 'Come up hither, view our number—the boundless fields of space in which we move, and cease to think your earth the centre—the loveliest—of creation ; or, the God that placed you there is unmindful of your sorrows, your hours of anguish.'"

CHAPTER XI.

"Whilst yet the calm hours creep,
Dream thou—and from thy sleep
Then wake to weep."

Shelley.

"Oh! there are looks and tones that dart
An instant sunshine through the heart,—
As if the soul that minute caught
Some treasure it through life had sought."

Moore.

DAY dawned upon the desert. Alethea, exhausted with grief and fatigue, slept by her father's body in the tent. Irenæus was preparing a grave in the sand, when several Arab plunderers rode towards the fountain. Reining in their foaming steeds, on seeing Irenæus, they looked intently at him, and the leader drew his sword. Irenæus returned his glance, and walking towards him, exclaimed, extending his hand towards the tent, "Arabs, I know your object; I am in your power, but fear you not; life is not the jewel I prize most dearly; yonder is my treasure—follow me." Overawed by his calm, commanding air, the leader of the band, with two others, alighted, and approached, with Irenæus, the tent where the maiden slept. One fair arm supported her head; unconscious of danger she slept on, and when the murderer bent over her, till his

warm breath fanned her cheek, dreaming she smiled. Hard must be the heart that could injure sleeping innocence, and, as he gazed on her, his heart melted with pity and admiration. He was a young man, with the wild, ardent passions of an eastern soul, and owned no master but his wayward will, yet was he generous, noble, and enthusiastic, adored beauty, and ever shielded its possessor from harm.

Slowly, lest he should wake the maiden, he left the tent, and turning to Irenæus, said : “Greek, we are friends ; I guess the whole : that maiden is an orphan, and dependent on thy care ; for her sake thou would’st live. I will do more than spare thy life ; not only will we leave untouched all that is thine, but assist in burying, beneath the palms, the old man, and then conduct you safely to the verge of the desert.”

Under the palms they made the pilgrim’s grave and raised a pile of earth above him. Opening their stock of provisions, the robbers gave the choicest bread and dates to the christians, filled their water-skins, and then the captain, leading to Alethea her faithful horse, assisted her, with gentlest care, to mount.

Day and night they travelled, with swiftest speed, until the face of the desert became gradually less barren ; hills were visible in the

distance, and clumps of low trees, with here and there a fruitful spot, showed they were near Egypt. The Arabs now stopped, gave them directions for their future course, heartily wished them success, then, gaily bidding adieu, rode back across the sands, and were lost to sight. Irenæus and Alethea went leisurely on, conversing about the strange beings they had just parted from, till the wild sublimity of the surrounding scenery attracted their notice. They had just reached the summit of a steep acclivity, and, spread before them, was a valley of luxuriant fertility, through which flowed a stream, having its rise in the neighbouring rocks, in its way towards the Nile, into which, several leagues further, it emptied itself. The sunshine played upon its rippling waters; lovely flowers, rich with dew and sparkling like gems, ornamented the vale, and clothed the over-hanging rocks. Monkeys skipped from branch to branch among the trees, fleet gazelles were drinking at the streamlet, and all things wore the aspect of happiness. Alighting, the travellers sat beneath an acacia, and the day glided rapidly away, as they perused the sacred scriptures, or were engaged in conversation.

At evening, Alethea gazed on the scene, rendered still lovelier by the brilliant sunset, and

exclaimed : “ How sad, Irenæus, that in a world, beautified with verdant vales like this, and furnished with more than man requires to satisfy his wants, sin should spread its baneful influence o’er what is fair and lovely. I am surprised God should permit the reign of evil, if he is omnipotent as we are taught to believe him ; surely he could make earth a paradise of goodness. Often have I reflected on this subject, while in my Arab home, but felt reluctant to tell my parents.”

“ What you have said,” returned Irenæus, “ sends me back, in thought, to the period when similar reflections and misgivings of God’s power crossed my mind ; but all doubts have vanished, and I clearly trace God’s wisdom and love in all his works. When Jehovah launched the world upon the sea of space, and adorned it with all that could gratify its inhabitants ; when he caused the rain of heaven to refresh, and make it teem with life and beauty, and commanded the sun to shed its warmth and light, he had an end in view,—even the happiness of man. God made him in His own image—lord of this earth—breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul ; all things were subject to his mild controul, and harmony existed throughout the whole. Being united in spirit to Jehovah, he returned his love, in the spirit of grateful obe-

dience: by degrees abusing his free-will, his thoughts and desires became sinful, his mental sight dim, and each view of heaven obscure. Like a torrent descending from its mountain source, widening, deepening in its course, sin once admitted, rushed impetuously on, till, forgetful of God, man sunk into complete depravity, and misery became the attendant of his path."

"But why did Jehovah leave man free, either to continue righteous, or become evil?" said Alethea.

"Because he created him to receive and return his love," answered Irenæus. "Even we finite beings, would little prize a love not spontaneous; how much less, then, would the great Jehovah? Love must be free, liberty is its essence; and happiness filled man's breast while he cherished love for God. Nature shared his bliss, and wore the unstained robe of purity: the graceful hart trembled not at the lion's roar, and the dove feared not the hawk's keen eye, for man had never imbrued his hands in blood. By forsaking God, he has veiled earth with gloom, and made it the abode of sorrow; but the voice of mercy calls him to return, and, delightful thought! a period is approaching, when he will listen to the heavenly call. In an age as yet unborn, the sin-subduing influence of christianity will

extend to earth's remotest limits; and man, refined and elevated by its presence, will recover his primeval innocence. No more will the hum, the din of war be heard, for the banner of universal peace will wave on every shore. The birds of heaven, the finny tribes, and the cattle of our fields will cease to be slaughtered; man's delicious food will be fruits and herbs, and the drunkard's poisoned chalice will remain untouched. Slavery, with her lash and chains, will fall, and tyranny be forgotten, because each heart being filled with love to Jehovah will acknowledge the *equality of souls*, and, individuals of each land, actuated by this noble principle, will unite as members of one family, and all labour for the good of all."

"Will that happy period soon arrive," asked Alethea.

"I fear it will not," returned Irenæus; "already, in large cities and populous districts, christianity is losing its pristine simplicity; there the followers of Jesus have ceased to stand aloof from connexion with paganism, and blend many of its absurd and dangerous opinions with the pure principles of the gospel. No longer united in bonds of brotherly affection, they labour to accumulate wealth for their own private benefit instead of the community; and thus avarice

tyranny, pride, and sensuality make rapid progress into the Church, and our holy faith is shrouded beneath a refined system of heathenism. Yet we need not be discouraged or sad ; all times and all events are ordered and controlled by heaven, and however sin may work its work, and wither the noblest and best qualities of the soul, which may truly be likened to flowers of paradise, they will spring again in beauty, and, at the appointed season, bloom too luxuriantly for wind or storm to fade! And now away to thy tent, for twilight wanes, and the stars of evening give their light : may sleep drown thy sorrows—thy weariness.—Good night.”

“ Good night, Irenæus,” said Althea, and patting the smooth head of their faithful dog, as it stationed itself by the tent door, she entered, and commending herself to God, soon lost all painful thoughts in the sweet forgetfulness of slumber.

Far differently Irenæus spent the night. With one hand pressed upon his brow, he leaned against an acacia, and gazed vacantly into the stream. Silvered by the moon it rippled unheeded by; the breeze fanned yet failed to cool his forehead, and the tranquillity of all around extended not to him; for in his heart, destroying its peace, reigned secret yet fervent love for Alethea.

He was a Greek, and in boyhood, 'ere christianity dawned on his soul, was a frequenter of that Athenean garden, where the noble, the talented, and the gay met for pleasure. Willingly he joined the giddy throng of Epicureans, and the dance, song, and banquet, brightened by the smiles of the lovely women of Greece, were to him sources of delight.

Yet never in those days of folly, had he seen a form so rich in beauty, a face beaming with innocence, like Alethea's.

Among the rocks of Ameime, her native home, he first beheld her: fleetly as the pet gazelle at her side, she was skipping from crag to crag, and her voice and joyous laugh, as she caressed her favourite and watched its antics, were of one whose heart sorrow ne'er had visited.

Seeing Irenæus close to her she started with surprise.

"Pardon my boldness, maiden," said he, advancing towards her; "I would fain crave a draught of water from the pitcher in your hand."

"It is empty," she answered, "but wait here till I return from yonder spring. You seem weary, stranger; have you travelled over the desert? Ah, you need repose, and, perchance, are far from your friends; my parents ever

welcome strangers, so come with me home, and there shall you have food and water too."

Her childlike simplicity won his admiration: he gladly accepted her invitation, and found her parents kind and hospitable, as she represented them.

Weeks wore away, and he remained their guest, so closely love twined round his heart, binding him to the spot where its object dwelt.

One glorious evening, when earth wore her richest dress, imparting happiness to her children, he returned from his usual ramble, and found Alethea alone in the bower where she often spent the twilight hour.

She was tuning her harp, and as he entered, exclaimed: "I am glad you are come, I have hearkened for your footstep an hour or more, to shew you the hymns my dear father has given me; listen to this:" and, ere he had time to answer, her clear, sweet voice was singing one of the rich, plaintive songs of the Hebrews, and her attention absorbed in the air she played.

At its close, she said, "Jewish poetry and music are so very beautiful! do you not think so, Irenæus?"

"I do," he answered, "and besides their real merit, the remembrance of the sufferings and patriotism of that unhappy nation throws over them a charm."

“How ardently they love their country!” returned Alethea. “My father says, neither poverty, time, or disappointments can make them forgetful of Jerusalem, and, although wandering in distant lands, they still regard that city as their home. I often weep at their misfortunes, and pray heaven may hasten their return to Zion.”

“They are not the only wanderers, Alethea ; he, who sits beside thee, has not home or kindred, and—”

“Stay with us—stay with us, Irenæus,” said she, interrupting him ; “my parents and brothers all love you, and would grieve at your departure.”

“But would your heart be heavy if I went away.”

“Yes, that it would, for I could not then listen to your tales of Athens, and of the mystic clime of Egypt, nor play to you my favourite hymns : in a hundred ways I should miss you : think not of going. Are you not happy ? your voice to-night is melancholy, and you smile not as you used to smile.”

“Alethea—” he exclaimed, with deep earnestness.

“Nay, Irenæus,” said the laughing girl, “look not at me so earnestly, nor hold my hand in

yours while speaking; why that serious look when I am merry? Hark!—did you hear that scream!” and, in an instant an expression of alarm pervaded her countenance.

“I heard nothing. Alethea, listen to me, my happiness depends on your”——

“Oh! did you hear that!—another—and another shriek, and what a tramping of horses in the street; do listen.”

“Something unusual has happened,” said Irenæus, rising and inwardly provoked at this interruption. “The city seemed in confusion when I came hither. Remain here, Alethea, I will go and learn the cause.”

At the same moment, her brothers rushed in, exclaiming: “The persecutors have at last reached our city—the slaughter has commenced—Oh, Jehovah, strengthen thy people in this coming hour of trial!”

The destruction of Alethea’s home, death of her kindred, and flight across the desert followed, and compelled Irenæus to conceal his feelings, for he thought within his heart, “She is beneath my protection, entirely alone with me; how can I reveal an ardent love like mine, without alarming her delicacy and shaking her confidence? I must bury it in my own heart, till she is safe with my

Alexandrian friends. Besides, she cherishes for me only a sister's love."

Each day, concealment grew more irksome; to be in her presence, hear her speak of by-gone hours, thank him for each act of kindness, and rejoice that heaven had provided her a friend who was kind as her brothers used to be, was more torturing than the pangs of absence.

Often during that night, while Alethea slept soundly in her tent, he gazed anxiously for the first streaks of morning in the east, that they might journey onwards towards Alexandria. The maiden's "good night" sounded in his ears, and her sylph-like form seemed visible, and long before sunrise, he gathered the valley's choicest fruits, and spread them on leaves for her repast. Then reclining on a bank he awaited her appearance, and, if a deeper colour tinged his cheek, or in more tremulous tones he spoke, when she came, it was all the sign of love that was visible, and passed away unnoticed by her.

"Where, now my father is no more, must I go, now we have entered Egypt," said Alethea.

"With me, to Alexandria," answered Irenæus. "I have friends there, whose hearts neither absence nor time can chill. Some of them were the gay companions of my boyhood, and others,

fellow-Christians. Among the latter, I will provide you a comfortable home, where, with the faithful, you will be happy."

"You will be there also, will you not?" asked Alethea.

"Why should I linger in Egypt?" he answered, despondingly. "I will sail for Athens, and preach Christianity in my native land; then will I wander, as your father did, till heathen rage or worn-out nature lays me, like him, in the grave. I have lost parents and kindred, and whenever death comes, and come it must, I shall die unnoticed and alone; no loved one will be near to watch my last breath, and o'er my grave, the tear of affection will not fall." A long silence followed, at length, Irenæus said—

"Alethea, thou art silent, tell me, will not an Alexandrian home be welcome?" She answered not, but drooped her head, till its dark curls veiled her face. "Speak, Alethea." Still no reply. The truth, that she loved him, at once darted, like sunshine, into his mind, and with it bliss. Gently putting aside her glossy hair, he perceived her cheek wet with tears.

"Dear Alethea, why do you weep?"

As her eye met his, she said, "I have no friend but thee, why should we part?"

He drew his arm around her waist, and as her

head sunk on his breast, he revealed his fervent—long concealed affection, and obtained her promise to become his.

Bright were the hours they spent in converse ; but Alethea, suddenly became sorrowful.

Irenæus inquired the cause.

“I was thinking that our happiness is too complete for earth, and some misfortune will soon break in upon our joy.”

“Banish such thoughts,” answered Irenæus. “So far from being too complete, it is the very happiness God intended for earth ; and if pure affection dwelt in every soul, such happiness would be general. Do not, my beloved Alethea, anticipate misfortune, for it is wrong, and shows a mistrust of the love and wisdom of Jehovah. How can our bliss be destroyed ? it depends not on external circumstances, but on the union of our spirits. We are assured of each other’s constancy—our love is mutual ; therefore, if misfortune lowers and we are doomed to part, though oceans be between us, or the desert’s burning sands, our hearts will ne’er be severed. Even death is powerless, for love is eternal and death only removes it to heaven, where, like a rose planted in rich eastern soil, it blooms more beauteous than before.

CHAPTER XII.

"Ye noble few ! who here unbending stand
Beneath life's pressure, yet bear up awhile,
And what your bounded view, which only saw
A little part, deem'd evil, is no more :
The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,
And one unbounded spring encircle all."

Thomson.

LEAVING that beautiful valley, the christians journeyed on, and were soon in the main road towards the once famous city, Heliopolis. Camels laden with merchandise, and vehicles of every kind, from the heavy cart drawn by oxen to the swift chariot, were passing and repassing ; for the road led, from the adjacent cities to a branch of the Nile. Alethea, to whom this busy scene was new, had a thousand questions to ask Irenæus. Night closed in as Irenæus stopped before an inn, and giving the horses in charge of an attendant slave, conducted Alethea into the house.

Groups of persons filled the chief room, but were so deep in conversation that the christians seated themselves unnoticed. At length, a man, whose dress and countenance stamped him superior to the other occupants, entered the room. His apparel was much worn, but of the finest texture, and arranged with classic nicety. Grey hairs

were scattered among his ebon locks, his visage was shrunk and pale ; yet he appeared young, and though his lip curled with proud disdain, as if he neither asked nor wished for sympathy ; the wild, anxious expression of his eye rivetted the interest of each beholder, and proved good feelings dwelt in his soul, ere withered by the world's unkindness. After glancing carelessly on the throng, he fixed his keen eye on the christians, and walked towards them. Irenæus rose and accosted him, intreated he would share their frugal repast, and the three were soon conversing as friends.

“ Stop, maiden,” exclaimed the stranger, as Alethea raised a cup to her lips ; “ look, ere you drink, if that water has a red tinge.”

“ It has. What gives it this peculiar appearance ?”

“ Human blood,” was his laconic answer.

In horror she dropped the cup, and, by her glance, intreated an explanation.

His countenance assumed an expression of bitter sarcasm, and he said : “ The mighty Severus has returned victorious from the east, and, not satisfied with butchering his fellow-men, where foe meets foe in deadly strife, and the barbarism of slaughter is forgotten in the trumpet's clarion and battle's pageantry, has declared it his

pleasure, that for the welfare of his vast empire, a certain sect, whose only crime is hatred to the gods of Rome, should be slain throughout his dominions.⁽¹⁵⁾ Well do the minions of his power execute the mandate, and, deaf to the voice of pity, kill their unresisting victims. To-day, in yonder city, have I seen young and lovely women, whose helplessness alone might claim protection, venerable men, grown white with age, and infants, slaughtered, till, maddened at the sight, I cursed mankind, and left that abode of cruelty. The stream which supplies this house with water, runs from thence, and, mingled with its tide, is the heart's blood of christians. Hundreds are conveyed from every town, up the Nile, to Alexandria, that the nobility and fair ladies of the capital may, at the public games, enjoy the sight of their tortures. Humane and generous-hearted beings; take your fill of pleasure so exalted, nor fear the sting of remorse. I once was high in the empire—honoured and respected by all. A wife, beautiful as the morning, blessed me with her love, and two smiling children made our life blissful as elysium. Tyranny drove me from my home; the pestilence destroyed my wife, my infants, and I am left restless, and spirit-broken. Fame bound her laurels round my brow—they are faded; friendship

promised much—then betrayed me. Away—away, I've sought for peace, but misery, vice, and cruelty haunt the abodes of men, and have made me almost hate my species. Yet the wretched and careworn shall find in me a protector—a friend—and should prosperity return, my influence and wealth shall be devoted to avenging the wrongs of those injured christians, whose religion, whether pure or erroneous, is at least equal to Pantheism. But why, maiden, does thine eye beam with such high resolve ; art thou, also, a friend to the persecuted Nazareans."

"We are christians," answered Alethea, with enthusiasm.

"Christians, are you," said a priest, who had silently overheard the conversation ; "then I will be the first to honour your presence ; take this cup—the sacred pledge of friendship, and we will drink together. Nay, shrink not, maiden, the loveliest lips may drink water pure as this." She looked imploringly at Irenæus, who sprung to dash the chalice to the ground, but a hand from behind seized him, and a soldier bound the stranger. The priest tore away Alethea's veil, and, holding her head back by her hair, compelled her to swallow the revolting draught, while the room rang with the laughter of the spectators. "No doubt, christians," said the

priest, "you are weary, and need repose, we will take you to some companions, and give you a night's lodging gratis." Saying which, he glanced to the soldiers, who dragged them from the house.

Onward, by torchlight, they went to the city, where, loading them with chains, their persecutors cast them, among other sufferers, into a dungeon that formed a portion of one of the mighty palaces of Heliopolis when, in its days of glory, it proudly called itself "the city of the sun."

"Farewell, now, to the future we painted in rainbow colours, Alethea."

"Name it not, Irenæus; my heart, like thine, is rent with sorrow; but the subject is too painful to dwell upon: rather let us employ the dreary hours in imparting peace to this unhappy stranger, who is our companion in suffering."

Irenæus acceded, and they spent the night in explaining to him the peace-giving principles of the gospel. He listened, till his misanthropy and scepticism gradually disappeared, and he heard, with pleasure, their words of comfort and truth.

"How is it," he at length exclaimed, "that the Supreme Creator allowed the greater part of

mankind to remain age after age in ignorance of religious knowledge so important as yours ?”

“We have no reason for believing such to have been the case,” said Irenæus. “I grant idolatry, to a great extent, has darkened earth. Yet, it is more than probable, some souls in every age have cherished pure notions of the Deity. The philosophers of Greece and Egypt, many of the learned in Chaldea and Persia, and some of the sages of India, give evidence of this. Methinks no person acquainted with the works of Seneca, Plato, Pythagoras, &c., can think otherwise. Even the doctrine of the metempsychosis, which may be found in the religions of Greece, Rome, Egypt, and the East, absurd as it appears, is, probably, merely a metaphorical description of the changes of each soul, in its passage from imperfection to perfection.

“When the wicked man becomes fully conscious of the depth of his sinfulness, he is filled with shame, and feels he has degraded himself below humanity, and has been descending to a level with the beasts that perish: in his contrition, he likens his ferociousness to that of the tiger, his blindness to that of the mole, and so on, till reform restores him to the dignity and happiness of manhood, and, by a holy life, he becomes, in a

future state—an angel. The common people, unable to receive truth in its purity, believed the soul actually passed into the form of kindred animals, till sin being extirpated, it regained the human form. But men like Pythagoras and Plato, could not possibly credit an opinion so absurd: they had minds of a higher tone—saw beneath its surface the sublime truth of the doctrine, and secretly taught it to the initiated.* To me it has ever been delightful to trace the portions of truth which are blended with various systems of philosophy, whether veiled in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the poetic mythology of Greece, or of Persia, it is still truth, and enlightened souls, penetrating the veil which shrouds it, behold and drink at the eternal fount of wisdom. The ignorant adore the idol; they regard it but as a symbol of the God supreme, to whom they bow in spirit, the former worship the symbolic serpent twined round the world; the latter see in it a representation of eternity.

“So is it in our system. While men of deep thought receive and teach the religion of the cross in its sublime simplicity, the illiterate cannot see beyond the outer form; thus they mistake the ceremony of baptism, for that baptism spirit, of which it is only the sign, and others

* See Appendix to Science of Correspondences.—*Madeley*.

imagine the emblems of Christ's death are really his body and his blood."

"In what, then, is christianity better than paganism?" asked the stranger.

"Paganism," returned Irenæus, "in which term, I include all existing systems apart from the Jewish and our own, has only faint glimpses of truth, handed down by tradition from the period when idolatry was unknown. Christianity contains a clear revelation of God's will; morality, the most ennobling, exemplified by the life of Jesus; the assurance of an immortal existence in a spiritual world of bliss; and many other sublime realities, which, once diffused, will civilize mankind, and thus increase their happiness."

The hoarse grating of an outer door, and the turning of their dungeon key, told them night was ended. Now the dreaded hour of parting had arrived. Chained to a fellow-sufferer, Alethea was led away, ere she could exchange a wild farewell or glance with Irenæus. As Irenæus, the last of the number, left the dungeon, the stranger, with a desperate effort, gathered up his chain, and throwing himself between Irenæus and the soldiers, exclaimed: "Friend, brief has been our acquaintance, but you have given what years of study failed to give,—peace to

my breast, and an assurance of immortality. Fear not for me ; if spared, I should live a christian ; a christian I will die." He verified his words ; for, before evening, he sealed, near Heliopolis, his faith with martyrdom.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Our souls’ deep dreams,
 Our young affections, have not gush’d in vain ;
 Soon in one tide shall blend the sever’d streams,
 The worn heart break its bonds—and death and pain
 Be with the past ! ”

Mrs. Hemans.

“ The day has dawned—the sun’s bright beam
 Pierces my cell with fitful gleam,
 My hour approaches—night shall see
 My prison’d soul at liberty.”

L. C. G.

DENSE was the crowd gathered round the christians, and cruel the taunts heaped upon them, ere they reached the Nile. Alethea saw not the moving mass, nor regarded their bitter sarcasm. In thought, she was far away, at Calvary’s mount, witnessing Immanuel’s death, then glancing at the sufferings of his noble followers ! and, the reflection that she paced the path of sorrow they had trod in the same holy cause, inspired her with such courage and contempt of pain, that she felt prepared for torture and death. What was earth that she need grieve to die ? ’Tis true its bowers, its plains, its limpid streams, were sources of quiet pleasure ; but these, and more than these, would be her heavenly portion. If Irenæus were free, and in safety, her heart would have clung

to life, and rightly too, for in her love was less of earth than heaven. Were she his companion, she could have wandered with him o'er sea and land, cheering him in heaviness, soothing him in sickness. Where he preached the gospel, she more privately could impart instruction : and should death come, she would be at his side, smoothening with affection the passage to the tomb. Surely, if Jehovah permits guardian spirits to surround his children, lightening their weight of care, he would behold, with an approving eye, Alethea's affectionate desire to share the hardships of Irenæus's missionary life, and bestow his blessing on her love. But, like herself, Irenæus was in chains, and doomed to die ; so life had lost its charm : and her earnest wish was, that they might expire together, and complete in heaven the union once contemplated here.

Standing on the vessel's deck, Alethea looked vainly for Irenæus, among the prisoners who were hurried into the adjoining boats, until her eyes were dim with watching.

"My God, let me behold him once again, nor die in ignorance of his fate : hear, oh, hear my prayer !" Again she glanced o'er the deep water : he was on the shore, his voice came with the breeze, sighing, "Adieu." Encircled by radiant sunshine, she bent forward, and stretching

her fair arms towards him, "Adieu, adieu!" she answered: the vessel turned a point in the river, and she saw him no more.

An infant wept piteously. "Poor child, thou art young to taste of human woe," she thought; and, leaning down, took it in her arms, and soothed it into silence. It looked earnestly in her face, and smiled in that sweet way only infants smile, played awhile with her glossy ringlets, and then fell asleep on her breast.

"Heaven bless you, maiden," said its mother, who, lying on the deck, seemed in the last stage of suffering. "Heaven bless you for your kindness. My infant's cry thrills through me! I cannot soothe it now—death is near—oh, my babe!—my babe will soon be—motherless. Give it me, a moment, that I may fold it once more to my heart." Alethea spake words of comfort, offering her the child. She heard them not—her infant's cries—her anguish, were alike forgot—she had breathed her last.

Alethea's little charge awoke, and called aloud for its mother; vain were the maiden's efforts to tranquillize it, for it wanted the food it ne'er would taste again. Meanwhile, soldiers approached to carry away the woman's body, and hearing the child, one of them tore it from Alethea, and, with a dreadful oath, flung it overboard; twice

it rose, struggling to the surface, then sunk beneath the waves. The scene was too much for Alethea, who fainted and fell exhausted. On reviving, she beheld a young man supporting her, and gazing in her face with solicitude. His accents were those of kindness, and they soon entered into conversation, and thus lightened their dreary voyage down the Canopic branch of the Nile. Being a christian, he was enabled to receive and impart consolation.

It was the close of day when they came in sight of Alexandria, and the setting sun poured a flood of splendour on its palaces and gilded the obelisks, as the signal sounded for the worshipers of the sun to offer prayer to their departing deity.

"What a beautiful city," said Alethea. "Are christians numerous there?"

"Very," answered her companion. "During many of the talented and noble have received and the late peace which has smiled on the church, publicly diffused our doctrines. Schools have been established, houses of worship built, and a vast number of the lower class have joined our ranks. The rapid progress of truth, has, in part, caused the persecution. Severus, alarmed for the empire, determined to crush his imaginary foe : but vain will be his efforts, maiden : though conqueror in

battle, he will be powerless here,—the angel of light has descended to earth, and onward will speed her flight to every shore. Thousands of the brightest spirits of our age may fall beneath his sword; but their words, example, and courage, will be remembered by survivors, and be the means of converting them. Having this cheering hope, we should banish despondency, nor fear the power of heathen rage, remembering, however dark the aspect of passing events may seem, He, with whom a thousand years is as one day, and one day as a thousand years, has founded his spiritual Church on so firm a rock, that hell can never prevail against it.”

“Why should we dread anguish and torture,—why shrink from martyrdom?” said Alethea, “since, unseen to us, we may, by dying, cause more souls to adore Jehovah than if our life were prolonged. ‘Cast thy bread upon the waters,’ says the son of David, ‘and thou shalt find it after many days.’”

As their vessel reached Alexandria, volumes of flame burst from a building near the river. “It is our place of worship—the women are there,” said the young man, and plunged into the stream. Vain were all attempts to impede his progress. Swiftly as an ocean bird he glided through the water, and, clearing the boats sta-

tioned on all sides, sprung up the bank, dashed through the obstructing crowd, and reached the building. There Alethea could see him, regardless of the fire,—the deadly slaughter, preaching to the soldiers, inspiring the Christians with fresh courage, and standing by the dying, with uplifted hand, pointing to their eternal home. Darkness gathered in, veiling his form from view, but not the remembrance of his heroism. Who could he be, that, with almost supernatural power, thus evaded every foe, and extorted admiration even from the barbarous soldiers. So youthful was his form, he seemed scarce past the age of boyhood, yet the intellect and zeal of manhood beamed in his fiery glance. Who could he be? Whence came he? The maiden knew not; for till she found herself supported in his arms, she had ne'er beheld him.

Dim burned the lamp, in a dungeon of Alexandria. Round Alethea were stretched the dying and the dead, while an effluvia of decaying bodies filled the air; and no sound broke the silence, but an occasional groan, or the last prayer of an expiring christian. The place in which those who came in the galley, were confined, was crowded till it would hold no more, and she was thrust into this cell of death.

The rose of health had left her cheek, her eyes

were sunk in their sockets, and her hair lost its glossy richness.

Thrice had morning dawned, and darkness veiled the earth, since brutal rage confined her there. Bewildered with the sight of anguish, she was powerless to soothe, and, suffering under the cravings of hunger and the torture of suspense, she sat on the pavement of the loathsome vault; till the delirium, known only to the famished, came stealing over her.

The door opened, and the dog of Irenæus bounded towards her, laid its smooth head on her shoulder, and gave a sympathizing whine. Inspired with fresh courage, she caressed it, saying "Poor Brutus, hast thou found me? Where is thy master?" and her tears fell fast and unheeded on its neck.

Footsteps approached. "Irenæus, are you come to save me! oh speak—is it you," she cried.

"Once again, maiden, we have met." She recognized the well-remembered voice of her companion on the Nile, and said, "Stranger, bring you tidings from Irenæus? Oh tell me if he still lives: and if so, whether in bonds or free."

"Maiden, I know not him of whom you speak: The dog was watching at your prison door, and entered with me. How exhausted you are. Share with me this food, it will revive you.

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Alas, alas, that man should delight in thus persecuting the innocent!"

"When am I to die?" asked Alethea.

"To morrow in the circus. Fear not; the agony of death is not so dreadful as we often picture it: one pang, one struggle, may be all you will suffer. I have accompanied numbers to the place of execution, and from what I witnessed, conclude the last conflict is far lighter than a captivity like yours.

"Each day, each hour, I expect to be apprehended, for my enemies are busy, and did not Heaven mysteriously shield me, I should not be with you to-night. Oft with wild enthusiasm have I courted death; so precious seemed the martyr's crown. I have plunged into the deadliest heat of slaughter, and boldly harangued the minions of Severus, when frenzied with success. God has an end in view, though I see it not, for thus preserving me."

The rushing of dense multitudes, and the noise of chariots, sounded from the street like a summons to prepare for death; and soon soldiers entered to lead Alethea to execution. The dog growled on their entrance, and, springing from her side, grasped the foremost by his throat, and he fell to the ground. But dearly was its courage repaid: the dying man thrust his dagger to its heart,

and it crawled to the feet of its mistress and expired.

The other soldiers dragged her through the crowded street, towards the amphitheatre ; and, dreadful as her doom appeared, one present, almost envied her fate, it was the mysterious stranger—the illustrious Origen.¹⁶

CHAPTER XIII.

"Once more his limbs are free as mountain wind!
But on his heart such sadness sate,
As if they there transferred that iron weight."

Byron.

IRENÆUS watched the galley bearing his beloved Alethea, till a turning in the river, hid her from his view, and the prow of the vessel was lost to sight, amid groves of citron and henna. Long afterwards, he imagined he could distinguish the voices of its crew, and hear the maiden's last farewell, as, with eyes fixed on the water, he stood in pensive reverie. A galley laden with prisoners passed,—another,—and another sailed: then Irenæus was hurried with his fellow-sufferers down the bank; and, though it was the way to death, welcome was the signal to depart, for blended with it, was the hope of rejoining Alethea.

As the vessel glided down the river, he recognized various objects, that, in brighter hours, he had beheld with admiration; and then thought winging away to the valley, near the desert, he thus meditated. "What a changing scene is life!—on that morn, when to my heart came the

knowledge of Alethea's love, and I knew, that in life and death, she was my own, how radiant shone the future to our imagination ; we were entering a land of peace, and should glide down this mighty Nile, and visit the scenes on its banks ; then, with my Alexandrian friends, enjoy the delights of social intercourse, and celebrate our wedding, until, with my bride, I could revisit my native Athens, and pace with her the scenes of childhood. She is lost ! Her form may glad these eyes no more : a captive, she may pine long years in Alexandria ; or, what is far worse, endure slavery in its most revolting form. O Heaven ! if such a doom awaits her, let death come to her release, and the grave be her sheltering place.

Strange and varied was the scenery along the river. In the mystic* clime of Egypt, joy and sorrow, pleasure and anguish, seemed placed as sentinels over each other: the love bower and the tomb, the desert and the garden, the smile of beauty and the groan of slavery, the pleasure yacht and ship filled with captives, were side by side, while the brilliant sunshine of the day, and the solemn grandeur of the night, heightened the whole, and cast o'er the gayest spirit a shade of melancholy.

* See Moore's Epicurean.

When the vessel arrived within a league of Alexandria, the capital, the attention of Irenæus was arrested by a peculiar air; floating on the fragrant breeze, it came and filled him with sad, yet pleasing emotions, for it was a song of home, —an air of his native land, and recalled hours, when he had listened to its tones from lips now hushed in the grave. Nearer and nearer came the sounds, until the boat from which the music came, was level with the galley, and he recognized in the singer, the sister of Philetus, and he too was there, conversing with a fair Egyptian—his young and lovely bride.

Lifting his fettered hands high as the links that bound them would allow, Irenæus waved his cap and called aloud to his friend. Philetus started, saw and knew him, and pushed his boat close to the galley. Few words sufficed to explain when and how he was captured, and springing on board, Philetus addressed the captain, told his name, his rank, and commanded the prisoner's release. Warm was the greeting given by his friends, as with unfettered limbs he sprang into the boat,—and numerous their questions. Philetus gaily silenced them, till he had wrapt a bandage round his wrists to lull the anguish caused by the chains, and offered such refreshment as they had on board.

"Now, tell me," said Philetus, "of the maiden I saw with you in the city of the desert, and of her father. Why are they not with you?"

"The old man is at rest: where the palms wave in the wilderness we made his grave: his daughter is a prisoner by this time in the capital, sharing the fate of other Christians. Cannot your influence save her, Philetus?"

"It shall. When we reach the city, our first care shall be to discover the dungeon where she is confined: a word from me and she is free. Discard anxiety, and tell us why you have embraced these new and strange opinions?"

"Because convinced of their truth. You remember, Philetus, our last evening in the garden, and the vague ideas I expressed of man's immortality. Long after you left me, I sat by the fountain, reflecting deeply on the same subject. Whether my late trials, the loss of my parents, or some influence from Heaven actuated me, I know not, but, certainly, in that hour, the errors and absurdities of our cheerless creed seemed pictured most vividly to my mind, and, when gazing on the verdant glen, each spot of which was rendered lovelier by the quietude of moonlight, I remembered the words of Epicurus, 'When death is, we are not,' my heart refused to believe death ended man's existence. 'It is *false*,' I exclaimed, starting from my seat, "man

cannot perish as the beasts: he has desires this life fails to satisfy, therefore, he will live again, and enjoy, in some other state, the rest he sighs in vain for here.'

" 'Where will he dwell?—Perchance his spirit hovers o'er and drinks happiness from the sources whence he sought it during life: he may wander through space; or find among the stars an eternal home.' At that moment I perceived I was not alone. Near the fountain, but hid from view till I arose, reclined a fair Athenian girl, bending lowly over a manuscript the clear moonlight enabled her to peruse.

" 'When I approached, she rose from her reclining posture, and in a voice I never can forget,—so rich, so melodious were its tones,—exclaimed, 'Stranger, I overheard your musings, and rejoice to possess an answer to all your doubts. Once, like yourself, I was a disciple of the garden, till the book I have just been reading convinced me the Epicurean philosophy is erroneous; secretly have I perused its pages, and only linger amid these haunts of worldly philosophy, to use my influence, when occasion offers, in converting souls from Paganism.'

" 'I wandered with my fair instructress in the garden some hours, listening, with interest, as she explained her heavenly creed, and conversed

about that spiritual world where will be our final home, and, ere we parted, she lent me her book.

“I saw her no more; though I sought her in the garden and throughout the city, not even the slightest rumour ever reached me of her fate. The Gospel of the Evangelist Luke, which she had lent me, was my constant companion ; each day I became more conscious of its truth,—that it contained a revelation from heaven: and at length I joined the christian church, and left Athens, to travel as a missionary. Such was my employment, when I reached Idumea and lingered at the abode of Clement in the hope of winning the love of Alethea, until your soldiers entered the city. The love of pleasure, which, you know, Philetus, I ever manifested, is sufficient proof that only a firm conviction of the truth of the religion of Jesus could induce me to renounce the Epicurean philosophy, and with it the society of my friends, to join a sect which requires its members to control their passions and think lightly of everything inconsistent with purity and christian worth. The life of a missionary, which I chose, is filled, more than any other, with hardships : not only is danger impending on the foaming deep, the barren sands, or in the forest ; but rage and hatred pursue him from city to city, he is ridiculed, persecuted, tortured, and in daily expecta-

tion of martyrdom. Many trials I have passed through, and many others will be the attendants of my path till the close of my earthly sojourn ; for neither the delights of friendship, nor the possession of wealth, will allure me back to the old philosophy."

" I do not question the sincerity of your motives, but I regret anything should have induced you to forsake us," said Philetus. " Why leave the society of friends who loved you well, and the prospect of attaining wealth and power, to embrace a life of self-denial. As to preparing for a future state, how can we better do so than by enjoying the present ; for if, as christians declare, God has created all things for our use, surely we may use them, and take our fill from pleasure's stream. I see you are about to answer, but we have now reached the palace, so wait till we have landed."

The party then left the boat, ascended a flight of marble steps, and entered a spacious arcade. Philetus beckoned to him a slave, who led Irenæus to a suit of private apartments, which were to be his own while he continued at Alexandria, and then presented him with a change of apparel.

On returning, Irenæus entreated his friend to accompany him in seeking Alethea.

" It would be useless before nightfall," returned

Philetus. "Wait till the city is tranquil, and I will gladly be your companion. Indeed, you need not be anxious, I well remember the maiden's features, and was present at the games to-day ; had she been among the victims, I should have recognized her ; so she is still alive, and will be till to-morrow, for none die after the games are over. Come with me to the banquet hall."

Slaves opened the massive doors, and they entered a saloon filled with the gayest of Alexandria's nobles, either reclining on divans, or standing in groups, to enjoy the breeze, that, laden with the perfume of flowers, streamed in ; rich carpets of Damascus covered the floor, and on the table fruits and viands in countless variety were placed. Sculpture and voluptuous paintings adorned this Epicurean apartment, and the eye wandered from them to groves, cypress and myrtle bowers, and shady walks, reaching thence to the Nile.

The games of the circus formed the theme of conversation, and Irenæus, unable to listen to the account of the sufferings of the martyrs, retired on the plea of illness, to an adjoining hall. The rising moon shone through the clustering plants, twined round the marble columns, and silvered the water of a fountain playing in the centre ; the ceiling, one mass of gold, glittered with the re-

flected light, and all around invited tranquillity and rest. Was the spirit of Irenæus tranquil? Ask the mother if she rests, when the sea waves roll on high, and her boy is on the billows? The maiden, when the trumpet peals and her lover is in the battle? Irenæus paced the marble hall, viewing its beauty—pictured the dungeon where, perchance, Alethea lay, and hated his freedom since it was not shared by her. Anon he paused, “a footstep,—’tis Philetus;” it died away, and louder came, from the banquet hall, the laughter of the merry guests. Once was a time he could have shared their mirth; he sighed at the darkness shrouding their spirits; hour after hour went on—he watched the departing moon; soon morn would break. A voice aroused him, ’twas his friend, at last, and together they left the palace.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Youth and the opening rose
May look like things too glorious for decay,
And smile at thee; but thou art not of those
Who wait the ripen'd bloom to seize their prey.

Leaves have their time to fall
And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,
And stars to set;—but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death.”

Mrs. Hemans.

So heart-rending were the scenes witnessed in many dungeons, by the friends, that only the hope of rescuing Alethea could have induced Irenæus to visit them; yet in vain he wandered from place to place; no trace of her could be discovered, and the conviction she had already perished, frenzied his brain. In a dark passage, leading to one prison, Philetus stumbled against something. A feeble groan, caused by the blow, escaped the object, and revealed it to be a human body, and on carrying it to the moonlight, he recognized the well-remembered features of an Alexandrian lady, with whom he had been on terms of strictest friendship.

“ Linda—dear Linda! is such thy hapless fate! How came you here; can it, indeed, be you, or am I wrong?”——

She made no answer, or knew who was bending over her, but in the delirium of death, pointed to the sky and exclaimed, "He lives—he lives—he is there—crowned as a martyr—hark ! he sweetly sings the hymn of victory, and smiles upon me. Probias, my love—my husband—I come—receive thy weary, weary bride." Heavily she gasped for breath, her fluttering arms fell powerless, and the film of death dimmed her eye. Philetus laid his hand on her heart ; it throbbed not—she slept in peace. He placed her body on the pavement and hurried onward, scarcely caring whither.

"Philetus," said Irenæus, with deep earnestness ; "is it possible no pity warms your breast on a night like this ? can you behold suffering and death—a friend expire in your arms—and still remain a persecutor ? Surely it is not so with you ; though averse to christianity, pity for their sufferings, and admiration at their courage, must be thine."

"You are right," returned his friend, "scenes like these unnerve me. But, what can I do ? the persecutor or the persecuted one must be. Linda only favoured the christians, her destined husband being a believer. We have seen her fate, and such would be mine, if, to a great extent, I espoused their cause. None would re-

joice more sincerely than I, were the emperor to adopt more pacific measures—but enough, see, the morn is breaking, we must return.”

“I cannot, I cannot, without the maiden ; your palace halls, all earth’s loveliness, would be nought if she were absent. Thou hast a bride, Philetus ; tell me, is not her presence thine Elysium ? Imagine, then, my sufferings, since Alethea was snatched away. In mercy do not go, while there is the slightest chance of finding her.”

“From my heart I pity you, and would gladly stay ; but it is impossible, the crowd increases each minute, and will soon block up the way. We must—we must return. One chance of saving her yet remains, if—”

“If what ? Oh, speak ! What chance remains ?”

“You may save her if you will be present with me at the games ; my seats are near the entrance, therefore, should she be among the victims, we may see and rescue her ere the lion springs.”

Irenæus consented, for, though the thought of viewing the cruelties in the circus filled him with horror, he felt, that if Alethea still breathed, he might, by this means, rescue her.

They reached the palace, where a party awaited the appearance of Philetus to start to the circus.

"Will Lætus be there to-day?" was his first question.

"It is thought not ; but all the flower of Alexandrian society will."

"That is well, for I shall be more at liberty to assist, when you require my aid, if the governor is not present," said Philetus aside to Irenæus.

"Can you tell us where the fair Linda is? we have missed her several days," asked one of the party.

"She died in my arms, before day-break, and in the frenzy of death, uttered the sentiments of a christian. Probias was imprisoned yesterday, and it seems she followed him, for I found her lying at the door of his cell."

"I guessed it would so end, for the eloquence of Probias was sure to impress deeply an euthusiastic spirit like hers. Poor Linda! in time past, she was the loveliest, the gayest of our circles, and, devoted to the Epicurean tenets, her voice has thrilled with the sweetness of a syren's, through the soul of many a votary of pleasure, and her form haunted his midnight dreams."

"Lately, she has had a complete distaste for her former amusements," said Philetus, "and when last at my palace she turned away from the company, and, walking along the citron grove, towards the river, said, in a tone of disgust,

‘Philetus, how vain, how unsatisfying are these pleasures; this gaiety distracts me, for it appears sinful.’

“Nonsense, Linda,” I answered. “Life is short; can it be wrong, then, to enjoy the fleeting moments as they pass?”

“‘But, are you sure death terminates existence? I have lately thought otherwise.’

“Well,” said I: “if one soul is immortal, all are, therefore, should the Deity punish you and I for this life of gaiety, we shall find companions in the place of doom, for thousands have paced the same flowery path. Many, like yourself, distress themselves about a future state; but, for my own part, I am content to wait for such knowledge of eternity, till death reveals the truth, and prevents me sharing the joys of earth. She made no answer, but I perceived a tear start from her eye; gaily dashing it away, I said, ‘Probias has taught you all this,’ and we parted, she to muse by the river side, I to join my guests.”

Arrived at the amphitheatre, Philetus whispered Irenæus to a seat, whence he might distinctly observe all who entered the arena, and then retreated to converse with other friends; for the gallery of the circus was the rendezvous of the nobility, numbers of whom went merely to discuss politics, the news of the day, and other

topics, without noticing what passed in the arena; heedless, that while they amused themselves, numbers were in the agonies of death.

Irenæus, with folded arms leaned over the gallery, gazing earnestly on the arena; but for his heaving breast, he might have been deemed a statue, so mute, so pale, so motionless, he stood.

Noon passed, and with it many a victim to the bar of Heaven; hope faded in the heart of Irenæus, for the games would soon be ended, and the last chance of saving Alethea be lost.

The massive gates once more rolled back, and a female entered, but her head was lowly bent towards earth. He started, as from a dream awaking, and exclaimed: "It is—it must be Alethea, and yet—how changed—can I be mistaken in that figure?" A roar shook the amphitheatre, bleaching the cheek of the stoutest, and a famished lion, lashing its tail around, bounded across the arena. The maiden cast a hurried glance upward, then knelt on the sand, and with clasped hands awaited, wrapt in prayer, her doom.

"'Tis she!—'tis Alethea! My God, I thank thee, thou hast heard my prayer." He lived, he breathed for her only, and, snatching a dagger from Philetus, leaped from the gallery. Alas! too late came the rescue; the lion had made its

fatal spring and stretched Alethea bleeding on the ground. Seeing Irenæus it left its victim and pounced on him. Wounded he turned and plunged the dagger to its heart, and the ferocious beast fell lifeless at his feet.

Taking Alethea in his arms, Irenæus rushed away from the amphitheatre, while the applause of its countless throng filled the air.

"Irenæus, is it thee?" said the maiden, feebly. "What rapture to behold thee once again; but where can we go, they will slay thee for this act. Oh, this pain!—I am dying."

"Fear not, dearest Alethea," he answered, "all will be well, and thou and I, soon far from harm;" closer she twined her fair arms round him, till, exhausted with pain, she drooped powerless on his shoulder. The chariot, with Philetus, overtook them; Irenæus sprung in with his, now senseless, burden, and they drove to the palace. Through the arcade and marble halls he carried her, until arrived at his own apartment, he laid her on silken cushions, near the open casement, and, heedless of his own wounds, watched over, supporting her, and strove to staunch the living tide gushing from her side. "'Tis vain—'tis vain, and but adds another throb to pain," she said. Weaker and weaker he grew, till his knee shook beneath its burden.

"Irenæus," she said, "how pale thou art! Oh, tell me, art thou also wounded? why pull that cap so closely o'er thy brow?" She raised it with her hand and discovered, what he vainly wished to hide, a deep gash in his head; as she touched it the blood streamed forth afresh, dying her white arms with its crimson. "Would I had perished," said Alethea, "e'er thou had'st tried to save me at this price."

"Heed it not, beloved one—parted in life, we are in death united."

A physician, sent for by Philetus, approached; but Irenæus waved his hand, in token that his skill would be ineffectual, and they wished to spend the moments that remained together.

Sad it was to witness how quickly life ebbed away, and they, so young, so virtuous, died. Each seemed to breathe but in the other's love, and with a countenance radiant with happiness, as if their bridal instead of death was near, conversed, until Philetus and other bystanders turned aside from the too affecting scene.

Again she fainted. "Alethea, my own loved Alethea," said Irenæus, "how cold thou art; oh, speak one word more: die not without one fond farewell, or giving me one proof of love."

She revived. "I hear thee; and, like an angel's voice, thine greets my ear. We shall meet in

heaven—farewell—farewell.” With an effort she raised her face to his : her pale lips pressed his own : it was her first and last fond kiss. He looked into her face ; the eye had closed for ever, she had expired in his arms.

Oh, how describe the tearless gaze of agony, when Irenæus found the bosom where his image had dwelt, heaved no more ; how he folded her to his heart, saying, in broken accents, “ Art thou gone, light and joy of my existence ; speak, oh, speak ! See, she breathes—her heart beats. Alas ! it was but fancy—I am desolate ; yet why desire to keep thee from thy native skies. My God ! to the region whither she has fled, let me follow ; hear, oh hear, my dying prayer !” The film of death gathered over his eyes. “ Philetus !—Philetus ! take this book, it is my parting gift. Art thou near—I cannot see thee, for a vapour floats before my eyes.”

“ I am with thee, alas ! alas ! that I cannot save—”

“ Oh water ! water ! only one drop to allay this thirst.”

Philetus raised a cup to his lips as he sunk back ; but his agony, his thirst, though unquenched, was now forgot :—he was dead.

Few can have seen the virtuous in death during the first few hours immediately after life has

flown, without noticing the serene expression pervading their countenance. Alethea and Irenæus appeared asleep, only their features wore a beauty more entirely angelic than during life, and a peace too sweet for earth was there.

That night, a procession moved slowly from the palace, towards the Nile, and having reached where a cypress waved its branches, sighing in the midnight breeze, it halted. It was the funeral of the lovers. So brightly the moon shone, that a few acacia and myrtle blossoms scattered over them, were plainly seen, and the passing wind shook dew-drops from the cypress, as if that tree of mourning wept o'er their fate. Philetus approached the bier, and, raising an embroidered cover, looked on the placid features of Irenæus and Alethea. His bride was with him : and taking her hand, he said,

“ Julia, these have reached the place of rest—the wanderer's home; death to them seemed not the cessation of enjoyment, but the commencement of bliss ; is it so with thou and I ? Thou art surprised to hear such words from one who has ever laughed at death ; but oh, if my heart were unveiled, and all its misery seen, thou would'st rather wonder how I could so long have mixed with the votaries of pleasure, and appeared gay. Listen,

love. To gain thy hand, I climbed the dizzy pinnacle of power ; yet, though I have wealth, fame, luxury, and, what is more, thy affection, a void is in my soul, which even thy love can never fill ; so it is, I am convinced, with every one whose hopes are bounded by earth. Irenæus and Alethea were happy ; their happiness shall henceforth be mine. Certain I am there must be truth in a religion that enables its professors to suffer and die in its cause, as they, and thousands of their fellow-christians have done ; therefore, I will read the book which was his parting gift ;" and, falling on his knees beside the bier, his full heart breathed its first prayer to Jehovah. "Great God of the christians, grant that this volume, the gift of him who is now at rest, may unfold to my spirit the hopes of immortality he prized so highly."

The attendant slaves buried the bodies by the cypress, and Philetus himself planted a rose to bloom over their grave. Then addressing his bride, he said, "Julia, thy soul has hitherto seemed the counterpart of mine, and hourly the union of our spirits has grown more complete ; shall religion part us ? Say, dearest, wilt thou be my companion in this, as in past folly ?—That look of thine and pressure of my hand, assures me

thou wilt ; then, be this grave our meeting place, here let us daily talk of heaven, and prepare to share its glories. If the souls of the dead can take cognizance of the events of earth, methinks Irenæus and Alethea must rejoice that their sufferings have not been useless, but the cause of our resolve to follow their example."

THE END.

NOTES.

PAGE 2, NOTE 1.

"As soon as infants, are resuscitated, which takes place immediately after their decease, they are carried up into heaven, and are committed to the care of angels of the female sex, who in the life of the body, had been influenced by a tender love for little children, and at the same time, by love for God. As these angels had, while in the world, loved all infants with a tenderness like that of their mothers, they receive the little ones committed to their charge as if they were their own; and the infants, on their part, from an inherent inclination, love them in return as their mothers. Every one has as many infants under her care, as, from spiritual maternal love, she desires."—See No. 332, *Swedenborg's Treatise concerning Heaven and Hell*.

PAGE 19, NOTE 2.

"Philadelphia is still erect; a column in a scene of ruins. 'It is indeed an interesting circumstance,' says Mr. Hartley, 'to find Christianity more flourishing here than in many other parts of the Turkish empire: there is still a numerous Christian population; they occupy three hundred houses. Divine service is performed every Sunday in five churches.' Nor is it less interesting in these eventful times, and notwithstanding the general degeneracy of the Greek church, to learn that the present bishop of Philadelphia accounts 'the Bible the only foundation of all religious belief;' and that he admits that 'abuses have entered into the church which former ages might endure, but the present will put down.'"—*Keith's Evidences of Prophecy*.

PAGE 19, NOTE 3.

" Smyrna is still a large city, containing nearly one hundred thousand inhabitants, with several Greek churches ; and and an English and other Christian ministers have resided in it. The light has indeed become dim, but the candlestick has not been wholly removed out of its place."—*Keith's Evidences*.

PAGE 19, NOTE 4.

" The state of Sardis now is a token that the warning was given in vain ; and shews that the threatenings of the Lord, when disregarded, become certain judgments. Sardis, the capital of Lydia, was a great and renowned city, where the wealth of Cræsus, its king, was accumulated, and became even a proverb. But now a few wretched huts, ' scattered among the ruins,' are the only dwellings in Sardis, and form the lowly home of Turkish herdsmen, who are its only inhabitants. As the seat of a Christian church, it has lost—all it had to lose—the name. ' No Christians reside on the spot.'—*Keith's Evidences*.

PAGE 20, NOTE 5.

" The Pactolus flowed through the centre of the forum at Sardis, and brought, in its descent from Tinolus, a quantity of gold dust. Hence the vast riches of Cræsus. It ceased to do this in the age of Augustus."—*Ruins of Ancient Cities*.

PAGE 20, NOTE 6.

" When Dr. Chandler visited Sardis, now called Sart or Sorte, in 1774, he found the site of it ' green and flowery.'"—*See Ruins of Ancient Cities*.

PAGE 40, NOTE 7.

"At a period posterior as well as prior to the commencement of the Christian era, there always reigned at Petra, as Strabo relates, 'a king of the royal lineage, with whom a prince, or procurator, denominated his brother, was associated in the government.' In the beginning of the second century, Petra, though its independence was lost, was still the capital of a Roman province, or the reputed metropolis of Arabia; and as its coins attested, the emperor, Adrian, added his name to that of the city; it long continued to be the capital of the third Palestine,—*Palestina tertia sive salutaris*; and as such was also the metropolitan see of fifteen cities pertaining to that province."—*Keith*.

PAGE 41, NOTE 8.

"It might with truth be called *Petræa*, not only on account of its rocky mountains, but also of the elevated plain already described. *Sheira* (Seir) the territory of the Edomites which is so much covered with stones, especially flints, that it may with propriety be called a stony desert, although susceptible of culture; in many places it is overgrown with wild herbs, and must once have been thickly inhabited; for the traces of many towns and villages are met with along the Hadj road, between Maan and Akaba, as well as between Maan and the springs of Hauran, in which direction are also springs. At present this country is a desert, and Maan (Teman) is the only inhabited place in it."—*Burckhardt's Travels*.

PAGE 41, NOTE 9.

"A narrow and circuitous defile, surrounded on each side by precipitous or perpendicular rocks, varying from four hundred to seven hundred feet in altitude, and forming, for two miles, 'a sort of subterranean passage,' opens on the east the way to the ruins of Petra. The rocks, or rather hills, then diverge on either side, and leave an oblong space, where once stood the metropolis of Edom, deceived by its terrible-ness, where now lies a waste of ruins, encircled on every side, save on the north-east alone, by stupendous cliffs, which will show how the pride and labour of art tried there to vie with the sublimity of nature. Along the borders of these cliffs, detached masses of rock, numerous and lofty, have been wrought out into sepulchres, the interior of which is excavated into chambers, while the exterior has been cut from the live rock into the form of towers, with pilastres, and successive bands of frieze and entablature, wings, recesses, figures of animals, and columns."—*Captains Irby and Mangle's Travels*, p. 407.

PAGE 42, NOTE 10.

"In that place where kings kept their court, and where nobles assembled, where manifest proofs of ancient opulence are concentrated, where princely mausoleums, retaining their external grandeur, but bereft of all their splendour, still look as if 'fresh from the chisel;'—even there no man dwells, it is given by lot to birds, and beasts, and reptiles; it is a 'court for owls, and scarcely are they ever frayed from their lonely habitation' by the tread of a solitary traveller from a far distant land, among deserted dwellings and desolated ruins."—*Keith*.

PAGE 45, NOTE 11.

"The caravans, in all ages, from Minea, in the interior of Arabia, and from Gerrha, on the gulf of Persia, from Hadramant on the ocean, and some even from Sabea or Yemen, appear to have pointed to Petra as a common centre; and from Petra the trade seems again to have branched out into every direction, to Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, through Arsinoë, Gaza, Tyre, Jerusalem, Damascus, and a variety of subordinate routes that all terminated on the Mediterranean."—*Vincent's Commerce of the Ancients*, vol. ii. p. 264.

PAGE 45, NOTE 12.

"It seems that letters and astronomy, and the trade of carpenters, were invented by the merchants of the Red Sea, and that they were propagated from Arabia Petræa, into Egypt, Chaldea, Syria, Asia Minor, and Europe."—*Sir Isaac Newton's Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms*, p. 212.

PAGE 45, NOTE 13.

"There is not any remaining, on any spot of earth, of the house of Esau."—*Keith*.

PAGE 46, NOTE 14.

Laborde says of Amelme: "there are the remains of numerous cisterns excavated from the rock, into which the water flowed by an aqueduct nine miles in length."

PAGE 103, NOTE 15.

"This persecution happened about the tenth year of the reign of Severus. 'About the tenth year of his reign, which falls in with the year two hundred and two, he returned from the East victorious; and the pride of prosperity, induced him to forbid the propagation of the gospel. The persecution raged everywhere, but particularly at Alexandria. From various parts of Egypt, the christians were brought hither to suffer; and they expired in torments.'—*Milner and Hawcis's History of the Christian Church.*

PAGE 118, NOTE 16.

"In the heat of the persecution Origen distinguished himself by his attachment to the martyrs, not only to those of his acquaintance, but, in general, to all who suffered for christianity; he visited such of them as were fettered in deep dungeons and close imprisonment, and was present with them, even after their condemnation, and boldly attended them to the place of execution; he openly embraced and saluted them, and was once in imminent danger of being stoned to death on this account. Indeed, he was repeatedly in peril of his life, for the persecution daily prevailed, and he could no longer pass safely through the streets of Alexandria; he often changed his lodgings, but was everywhere pursued, and, humanly speaking, it seemed impossible for him to escape; his instructions, however, and his zeal produced great effects, multitudes crowded to hear him, and were, by his labours, incited to attend to Christianity.—*Milner and Hawcis's History of the Christian Church.*

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